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THE RAPE OF POLAND

Pattern of Soviet Aggression



Stanisław Mikolajczyk

THE RAPE OF POLAND

Pattern of Soviet Aggression

Whittlesey House

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THE RAPE OF POLAND

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Dedicated to the Polish People

PREFACE

A raging question in Poland has become, "How long will it take them to communize us completely?"

To my mind, however, the question is badly framed. I am convinced that human beings cannot be converted to communism if that conversion is attempted while the country concerned is under Communist rule. Under Communist dictatorship the majority become slaves—but men born in freedom, though they may be coerced, can never be convinced. Communism is an evil which is embraced only by fools and idealists not under the actual heel of such rule.

The question should be phrased: How long can a nation under Communist rule survive the erosion of its soul?

Never before in history has there been such an organized attempt to demoralize men and whole nations as has been made in Communist-dominated countries. People there are forced to lie in order to go on living; to hate instead of to love; to denounce their own patriots and natural leaders and their own ideas. The outside world is deceived by Communist misuse of the organs of true democracy, true patriotism—even, when necessary, true Christianity.

Who rules Poland today, and by what means? The answer is as complex as the nature of communism itself.

The pattern of Communist rule in Poland goes back to 1939, when Molotov and Ribbentrop agreed to partition my country. After stabbing Poland in the back while Hitler was engaging the Polish Army in the west, the Communists established their iron rule in the east of Poland. This *de facto* rule was tacitly recognized in the conference rooms of Teheran and Yalta.

Therefore it is important to recognize the real aims of the Communist, his methods, the pattern of Soviet aggression.

By October, 1947, the month in which I began my flight to freedom, the Communists ruled Poland through secret groups, open groups, Security Po-

lice—including special Communist units called the Ormo, the military, the Army, Special Commissions, and Soviet-patterned National Councils. A million well-armed men were being used to subjugate 23,000,000. Control of all top commands was—and remains—completely in the hands of Russians. Their orders, even some of the more savage ones, were and are now being carried out by Poles. These Poles are either Communists or men of essentially good heart whose spirit has at long last snapped. They are mainly chosen from among the 1,500,000 Poles transferred by Stalin to Russia in 1939. Stalin has “prepared” them thoroughly for their work.

The American reader who scans these words while sitting comfortably in a strong, free country may wonder at many aspects of Poland’s debasement. He may wonder why the nation did not revolt against the Communistic minority which has enslaved it. On the other hand, he may wonder why Russia needed two and a half years to impose its rule. Or why Russia went to the trouble of camouflaging its aggression during much of that period.

But the Communist minority has gained absolute control simply because it alone possessed modern arms. History reveals instances where a mob of a hundred thousand, armed with little more than rocks and fists, has overcome despotic rule by one assault on a key city or sector. Today is another day. If the despot owns several armored cars, or even a modest number of machine guns, he can rule. The technology of terror has risen far beyond the simple vehemence of a naked crowd.

We in Poland fell—for this reason and for many others. We fell even before the war had ended because we were sacrificed by our allies, the United States and Great Britain. We fell because we became isolated from the Western world, for the Russian zone of Germany lay to our west, and Russia leaned heavily on the door to the east. In the morbid suspicions of the Kremlin, the plains of Poland had become a smooth highway over which the armor of the west might someday roll. Thus, much of our nation must be incorporated into the USSR, and the rest must be made to produce cannon fodder to resist such an advance. We fell because the Russians had permitted—indeed, they encouraged—the Germans to destroy Warsaw. In the average European country the capital remains heart, soul, and source of the nation’s spirit. Our capital was murderously crushed; its wreckage became not alone the wreckage of a city but the debris of a nation.

We fell because while so many of our best youths were dying while fighting

with the Allies, so many of the people who knew the dream of independence were slaughtered and so many who constituted the backbone of our economy were herded like cattle into Germany or Russia. We fell because Russia stripped us of our industrial and agricultural wealth, calling it "war booty."

We lasted two and a half years because we were the largest nation being ground down to fragments behind the Iron Curtain. We held out because we are a romantic people who can endure much if the prospect of liberty remains on the horizon. We lasted because the deeply ingrained religion of the country brought solace and hope. We existed because, through centuries of hardship, we have learned to fend, to recognize the tactics of terror and propaganda. We held out because the Poles have loathed the concept of communism since it first showed its head, and because the strong-armed bands of communism—strong as they were—were still not huge enough to blanket all the scattered farm lands which make up so much of Poland. The sparks of freedom flicker and sparkle through the length and breadth of agricultural Poland, fanned by priests and members of the intelligentsia who hide with the simple peasants when the horrors of life in the cities become too great to bear.

Russia carefully camouflaged its actions in Poland for much of two and a half years, because it wished to make certain that the Americans and British would again disarm and drop back to their traditional torpor of peace. The Reds took into consideration Poland's status as an ally, not in any humane way, but with an eye to the possibility that if they raped us too abruptly, the West might remain armed and thus complicate the job of grabbing another country.

The Western mind may find it hard to comprehend rule by a fanatic handful. Yet such rule is a fact, both in Poland and elsewhere in eastern Europe. After the fixed elections of January, 1947, the Communist Party was itself a party subjected to purge. Its size in Warsaw, for example, was cut from 40,000 to 24,000. This murderous group no longer had to wear the cloak of democracy, shielding itself as the "Polish Workers Party"; "window dressing" became superfluous, as well as the people who filled the windows.

The Western mind may find difficulty, too, in reconciling the facts about Poland's rule with the apparent enthusiasm of the vast mobs one sees at Communist rallies, grouped around the speaking platforms of tirading, frenzied leaders. It must be remembered, however, that these mobs have been commanded to gather. A worker who does not obey the command of the NKVD's

"adviser" in each plant—to appear at a given place and time—is dismissed, and his dismissal means personal catastrophe. For he and his family cannot find work, cannot have a food-ration card, and cannot have housing for himself and his loved ones, if he does not yield. The newsreel cameras, whose film reaches the free countries, never show the empty side streets, can never film—at close range—the gaunt faces in the marching mobs. "I have never seen so many thoroughly unhappy people marching," Cavendish Bentinck whispered to me the day the Warsaw people were commanded to file past the reviewing stand in honor of Tito's visit.

Will Communist control eventually spread itself thin and snap, as did the military rule of Adolf Hitler? I wondered about this, too, in the dark hours of my struggle before I left Poland. The answer appears to be an emphatic no. Hitler attempted both to rule and to administer with Germans; Stalin rules with key Russians in control positions and administers with traitorous, corrupt, or weak nationals of the country to be ruled. In Russia today men and women of every nation are now being trained and schooled for the day when they will return to their native lands, which they know so intimately, to rule under direct command from Moscow. Stalin trains Frenchmen to rule France, Italians to rule Italy, Englishmen to rule England, Latins to rule the Latin countries, Japanese to rule Japan, Chinese to rule China, Indians to rule India, blacks to rule blacks, and Americans to rule America. . . . For Stalin, an evil genius, is more grimly efficient than any other tyrant in history. And he intends to conquer the world.

STANISLAW MIKOLAJCZYK

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
-------------------	-----

Chapter One

THE PEACELESS V-E	i
-----------------------------	---

The war ends—But I cannot celebrate—Poland has a new savage master.

Chapter Two

THE RAPE	4
--------------------	---

Ribbentrop and Molotov partition our country—The Nazis overrun us—Molotov gloats—I escape—Poles get back in the fight—Hitler invades Russia.

Chapter Three

ALLY	14
----------------	----

Russia is churlish about our aid—Our officers are missing—Stalin wants the Polish East—Appeasement grows.

Chapter Four

KATYŃ	28
-----------------	----

15,000 Polish prisoners of war dead—The Germans open the graves—German and Russian hypocrisy—Truth about the murders—Stalin said "Liquidate."

Chapter Five

LOSS OF A PATRIOT AND MORE	39
--------------------------------------	----

Sikorski dies—I am named Prime Minister—Teheran decisions—Bierut goes to Warsaw.

Chapter Six

BETRAYAL	66
--------------------	----

Moscow provokes Warsaw to rise—General Bór asks for

*help—Stalin sits back—The Lublin Poles and betrayal—
Run-around in Moscow—Bór surrenders.*

Chapter Seven

ANATOMY OF APPEASEMENT 91

*We pursue an agreement—Stalin prefers his stooges—
Shocking details of Teheran—Churchill backtracks—
Stalin insists on half our country—I resign as Premier.*

Chapter Eight

YALTA 106

*The usurpers take over in Poland—Pledges and betray-
als of Yalta—Safe conduct for underground leaders—The
leaders disappear—Churchill is depressed.*

Chapter Nine

REVERIE 121

*I fly over Poland—The stricken land below—Exhausted,
bewildered, abandoned.*

Chapter Ten

A "PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY" 124

*Compromises in the Kremlin—The governments merge
—The underground leaders are hostages—No appeal.*

Chapter Eleven

HOME 130

*The Provisional Government reaches Warsaw—My wel-
come from exile—My mother is alive—Mama Gomułka
—Potsdam bickering—Molotov grabs all.*

Chapter Twelve

THE INTIMIDATION BEGINS 145

*The fake Peasant Party—A poisoned cigarette—Murder
in the woods—Terror, arson, boycotts—A man from the
tomb—The Boy Scouts get it.*

Chapter Thirteen

REFERENDUM 161

*The police state emerges—Demonstrations against fraud
—We win but are counted out—Communists inspire
pogroms—Stalin is weary—He demands a stolen election.*

<i>Chapter Fourteen</i>	
FREE AND UNFETTERED	180
<i>Mechanics of the election fraud—Our candidates run the gauntlet—Communists have many fronts—The ten stricken lists—We vote in spite of hell—Counted out again.</i>	
<i>Chapter Fifteen</i>	
SOVIETIZATION	203
<i>We resign from the cabinet but remain in parliament—The new constitution is Communist—Communists get key posts—The standard of living goes down—The economy is nationalized . . . and pauperized.</i>	
<i>Chapter Sixteen</i>	
THE TIGHTENING VISE	222
<i>I am "in league with the underground"—The sinister plot—Communists seize the youth—The Church is attacked—Erosion of the soul.</i>	
<i>Chapter Seventeen</i>	
THE FINAL STRAWS	230
<i>The secret government—Russians pull the strings—The armed might of the police—Life under terror—I learn of my "coming" death—I decide to flee.</i>	
<i>Chapter Eighteen</i>	
ESCAPE	243
<i>The break for liberty—Home for a razor and a gun—To the forest—Helped by a "Communist"—Safe in the British zone.</i>	
<i>Chapter Nineteen</i>	
CONCLUSION	251
<i>Communism is Red fascism—Deadly parallels between two systems—More dangerous than fascism—How to fight back—The free world must combine—Counterwave of the future.</i>	
APPENDIX	259
INDEX	299

Chapter One

THE PEACELESS V-E

The war ends

But I cannot celebrate

Poland has a new savage master



BORN literally and figuratively, the lights went on again throughout the Allied world on the night of May 8, 1945. Everywhere there was great rejoicing in the streets, prayers of thanksgiving in the churches, but grief unspoken in the homes of the dead. Above all there was relief. A brutal and powerful enemy, Hitler's Germany, had at last been crushed—beaten down at shocking cost, but finished.

I stepped out of my flat opposite Kensington Gardens—whose antitblitz searchlights now swept playfully across the London skies—and joined a street scene similar to those enacted in Allied cities all over the earth.

The pinched and pasty faces of Londoners who had suffered for six years were alight too that night. Those happy people, normally reserved, threw restraint to the winds. Complete strangers embraced and enjoyed the first real celebration the tired city had held since the coronation of George VI almost a decade before.

I walked along in the happy crowd, with it physically, but hardly a part of it, though there were events in my life that might have given me a rightful share in the revelry. I had been a soldier in this war, and I had known danger, hardship, and imprisonment. My country had been crucified—there is no other word—by the Nazis; but they were now routed, and their crimes at least partially avenged. I would soon be reunited with my wife, whose years of weary

captivity in German camps and prisons were now past. There was indeed reason to be grateful.

But for at least one man in the ringing streets of London that night, there was no peace on V-E Day. Peace had missed one Ally. The lights were still out in Poland. Its people would neither dance nor shout nor feel release from terror. As I walked about in Kensington streets, I reflected that only the nature of the terror had changed: where it had been a black, discernible thing—German sadism openly seeking to exterminate the Poles—now it was a hopeless and bewildering gray. Although it would not be immediately obvious to everybody, Poland had a new and savage master—Soviet Russia. Hailed in Britain, the United States, and other countries as a “peace-loving” nation and “democratic Ally,” Poland’s new master was actually a totalitarian country, clearly bent upon world conquest.

For me, a peaceful man, the war had not ended as long as the people of Poland, who had sacrificed heavily to help provide this night of celebration, were still suffering the scourges of another invader.

Under a cynical agreement between the USSR and her puppets set up as the government of Poland, more than forty thousand officers and soldiers of the Polish underground army, courageous men who had fought the Nazis against fantastic odds throughout the war, had just been rounded up and deported to Russia.

After helping the Red Army sweep over Poland in its vast counteroffensive against the Germans, thousands of other underground fighters had been subsequently seized and their commanders executed.

While London and the world danced in the streets, Polish civilians were being arrested in large numbers, simply for believing that they, too, were now at peace and had the right to resent the dictations of a foreign power. Multitudes of Poles living in East Prussia and Lower Silesia were being arrested as “German citizens” and herded into Siberia for forced labor.

Poland was being stripped of her factories, her equipment, railroad systems, her livestock, and her wealth on the pretext that this constituted war booty. Whole villages were being burned. Freedom was being stamped out even as it was being reborn—and slavery installed in its place.

These were the fruits of victory for Poland. This was V-E Day for the first Ally that, when invaded, fought back, produced no quisling government, and was hailed by President Roosevelt as “the inspiration of the nations.” This was

Poland's reward for providing soldiers, sailors, and flyers to every front. This was the result of the death of nearly six million persons—one-fifth of her population—and the devastation of her cities. This was the plight on V-E Day of the "strong, free, independent, and democratic" Poland that had been firmly promised only three months before at Yalta.

My roots were too deeply planted in my country to ignore its misery, even in the midst of the world-wide celebration of peace. Too much had gone before; too much intimately involved me. The din of the London streets made it only more imperative for me to find ways to overcome the Kremlin's hostility and to return to Poland. As Prime Minister of the Polish government, I had sent men to die for Poland. Now the banners of the enemy had changed, but the fight for freedom and independence continued. My job was to get back, to rejoin the men, and to help them achieve the freedom that they thought would come to them at the war's end. "Liberated Poland," it was called on V-E Day when peace returned to Europe. My aim was to strip that term of its mockery. My obligation was to do whatever I could to help Poland and Poles everywhere to greet the day when they too might enjoy peace.

Chapter Two

THE RAPE

Ribbentrop and Molotov partition

our country

The Nazis overrun us

Molotov gloats

I escape

Poles get back in the fight

Hitler invades Russia



POLAND's ordeal, now typical of the ordeal of each free nation swept over by the Communists, began as long ago as August 23, 1939, with the stroke of the pen that signed the German-Russian nonaggression pact.

By the wording of that pact, signed in Moscow by Ribbentrop and Molotov, Germany and Russia agreed first of all to refrain from attacking each other; not to help any third power that might attack either one; to exchange information; and to settle all problems by arbitration. The treaty, sworn effective for ten years, and possibly fifteen if neither denounced it, went into effect on its signature. But the invidious and sinister part of this agreement was an additional secret section, carving up Poland between the two aggressors and defining the "spheres of influence."

SECRET ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL

On the occasion of the signature of the nonaggression pact between the German Reich and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the undersigned plenipotentiaries of each of the two parties discussed in strictly confidential conversations the question of the boundary of their respective spheres of influence in eastern Europe. These conversations led to the following conclusions:

1. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

2. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the USSR shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narew, Vistula, and San.*

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish state and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments. In any event both governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

3. With regard to southeastern Europe, attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterestedness in these areas.

4. This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939

For the Government
of the German Reich

von Ribbentrop

Plenipotentiary of the
Government of the U.S.S.R.

V. M. Molotov

* This agreement was subsequently altered in a Secret Protocol signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov on September 28, 1939:

"The Secret Supplementary Protocol signed on August 23, 1939, shall be amended to the effect that the territory of the Lithuanian state falls to the sphere of influence of the U.S.S.R., while, on the other hand, the province of Lublin and parts of the province of Warsaw fall to the sphere of influence of Germany."

When Hitler signed the pact, he knew that Britain and France, with whom we had mutual assistance pacts, were not prepared to fight immediately. Hitler also knew that, unlike Austria and Czechoslovakia, Poland would fight. By sealing his nonaggression pact with Russia, Hitler eliminated the immediate possibility of Russia's obstructing his proposed conquest of Poland. If Russia had come to the Polish side, the battle of Poland would have been prolonged for a considerable time, during which time, Hitler knew, Britain and France would arm and attack him from the other side. Eight days after the pact was signed, the Nazis invaded Poland.

Alone, we fought as best we could. But our efforts were pathetically inept. One needs more than courage to fight against flame-throwing tanks and large mechanized forces. It was a rout from the first day to the last, a bitter rout, which for me—then a private in the Polish Army—became an endless succession of bombings, retreats, sickening sights of broken cities and of the strafing and blasting of roads clogged with defenseless people fleeing from one gaping jaw into another.

The Poles were and are a people who believe—perhaps foolishly these days—in the solemnity of international accords. We were bound to Russia at that time and they to us by a joint pledge of nonaggression. There were millions of Poles, including many of those who sought to stop German armor with such weapons as homemade petrol grenades, who believed that Russia would come to our aid in the first weeks of the war. There were others who, though they doubted that Russia would live up to its pledges, were certain that the USSR would give help to our reeling forces.

Then on September 17, 1939, Russia did intervene. But it was with calculated treachery. The Red Army rolled into eastern Poland and did not stop until it completed the closing of the Nazi-Red pincers in the center of our country. The north-south meeting line that had been agreed on weeks before by Ribbentrop and Molotov came to bear their names.

Hitler announced on September 28, 1939, that Poland was finished as a nation. A month later Molotov crowed over our downfall. Speaking before the Supreme Council of the USSR on October 31, 1939, this vehement man hailed the united operations of his country and Germany that had conquered Poland and exclaimed:

"Nothing is left of that monstrous bastard of the Versailles Treaty."

As the viselike movement squeezed the formal resistance out of Poland,

many military units, including the one to which I was attached as a map courier, were ordered to retire to neutral countries. President Ignacy Mościcki and the government of Prime Minister Feliks Sławoj-Skłodkowski escaped into Rumania and were interned. My unit reached Hungary and was interned at Camp Hagony. I escaped and arranged for many others to do the same. With others I fled to France by way of Yugoslavia and Italy.

The desire to get back into the fight was a compelling one for all of us. It was perhaps even more compelling for me as I had received a personal call from one of the great men of Polish history—General Władysław Sikorski. Though patently the best military mind in Poland, General Sikorski had been stripped of his authority before the war during one of the weird excesses of the Pilsudski-Beck regime. At the outbreak of hostilities he offered his services to the government. He was coolly rejected. The snub prompted him to go to France, where on September 30, 1939, he was named Prime Minister of the Polish government by the new president—Władysław Raczkiewicz. His government received prompt recognition from France, Great Britain, and shortly later, the United States. All other nations eventually joined in recognition.

I reported to the General at the Hotel Regina in Paris at the end of November, 1939. We were old friends, but I stood before him stiffly in my role as private in the Polish Army and gave my name. I told him I wanted to go on with the fight to free our country. With a smile he put his arms around me.

"Where have you been so long?" he demanded, pretending severity. "I've been looking for you all over Europe."

The General immediately put me to work preparing the statutes and general plans for the exile parliament's first meeting. We got in touch with Ignacy Jan Paderewski, then in Switzerland, and invited him to come to Paris. He would provide us with the spiritual leadership we so desperately needed in those dark days. Although in bad health, the old gentleman made the trip. On January 23, 1940, at the Polish Embassy in Paris the parliament held its first meeting, elected Paderewski its chairman, and gave me the post of first deputy. The statesman-pianist was forced to return to Switzerland because of his health, and hence I served in his stead.

Our first task, after the formation of the government and the parliament-in-exile, was to create the Polish armed forces abroad. Remnants of our scattered troops were reporting to us in France from Hungary, Sweden, Latvia,

Lithuania, and Rumania. Inside France there were close to five hundred thousand Polish citizens, many of whom quickly joined our colors. The French government and people, extremely friendly and hospitable to us, made it easier for us to reunite our forces on foreign soil.

We also made radio and courier contacts with the Polish underground, which had been formed during the hard days of the fight for Warsaw by the leaders of the four major democratic parties that had opposed the Pilsudski-Beck regime.

The leaders were Maciej Rataj of the Peasant Party; Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, Socialist Party; Aleksander Dębski, National Party; and Franciszek Kwieciński, Christian Labor Party.

The first military commander of our clandestine force was General Tokarzewski. He was shortly replaced by General Stefan Grot-Rowecki, who fashioned the basis of the Home Army's greatness.

Our duty was to provide these courageous men, and the men, women, and children who served under them in face of hardship, with some means of waging war. We sent them money, plans for guerrilla warfare, instructions on how to sabotage the enemy where it hurt most. In those early days the underground operatives were especially adept at blowing up trains transporting Russian oil and grain to the German forces, then preparing for the attack on France and the Low Countries. The response of the underground to our efforts from Paris was immediate and inspiring. Poland was back in the war.

Before the fall of France we were able to arm and train 84,000 men for action in the west. Although Mussolini was friendly to Hitler, the lesser consuls in Italy, as well as those in Rumania and Hungary, were helpful in allowing Polish soldiers to cross their borders on the way to France. General Duch's First Division of Grenadiers, incorporated into the French 20th Army Corps, was hurled into the defense of the Maginot line and suffered casualties of nearly fifty per cent. General Prugar-Ketling's 2nd Rifle Division, part of the French 45th Army Corps, was engaged in the Maginot debacle and, refusing to capitulate, withdrew into Switzerland and was interned. General Maczek's mechanical division, employed to cover the left wing of the French 7th Army Corps, fought in Champagne. Colonel Szyszko-Bohusz's Podhale Brigade, mountain troop, fought in Narvik, later was hit hard by the Germans as its members disembarked in Brittany, then scattered, and got back into the fight later in the war. Two other Polish divisions were not equipped in time

to fight. They were evacuated to England. The Polish Air Force was used in defense of French airdromes.

France fell swiftly when Hitler struck. In the wild disorder around Paris and then around Bordeaux, we were appalled to learn that the French High Command had arranged for our Polish forces to capitulate along with the French Army.

General Sikorski stormily refused in a heated session with General Weygand. Our leader decried the paralyzed defeatism at the top of France's military and political commands. He attempted to point out to Weygand the ease of retiring into North Africa and re-forming his forces. It was fruitless pleading. General Sikorski stormed out of the meeting shouting that France could capitulate but that Poland had every intention of continuing the fight.

He flew immediately to London to see Winston Churchill and to pledge Poland's support to the Allied cause. Churchill clasped his hand and ordered the British Navy and such Polish vessels as had reached the safety of British ports after Poland's fall to cross the channel and evacuate the Polish forces.

Sikorski assigned me to move the Polish parliament to England and Polish elements of the French Air Force to North Africa. This was not an easy task. As we moved through southern France to Port Vendres, our men—though en route to reengage the common enemy—were often assailed by hapless refugees who cluttered the roads. Some Frenchmen cursed us as the origin of their misery—yet they banded together later into *maquis* brigades and helped free their own country.

When the job was finally done, I made my way back through the Pyrenees to the outskirts of Bordeaux in the grim days of Dunkirk. The temporary capital was occupied. I fled south and by June 22, 1940, reached Saint-Jean-de-Luz to catch what must have been the last large ship to leave—the Polish liner *Batory*. Some twenty-four thousand of our men eventually reached England. They became the nucleus of a force that subsequently grew to a quarter of a million.

In London my duties placed me more directly in touch with our daring and ingenious underground. Their needs were great, however, and our funds were almost nonexistent. Britain's back was pressed so flatly against the wall that London could offer us scant aid. There remained only the neutral but sympathetic United States to turn to for help.

In April of 1941 General Sikorski and I went to Canada to arrange with Mackenzie King to permit Canadian and United States Poles to train on Canadian soil. Then we flew to Washington, hoping to interest the United States government in our determination to fight for the liberation of Poland.

I recall my surprise at the White House when I discovered that President Roosevelt was an invalid. But I was immensely struck by his vigor and frankness—especially by his ringing condemnation of the Soviet forces.

Roosevelt promised to include Poland in the newly formed Lend-Lease program, for which all Poles remain grateful to this day. Then he asked a favor in return. He requested the General and me to visit United States cities where there were concentrations of Polish-American workers and to implore them to resist the Communist *saboteurs* and propagandists then combating American efforts to supply the fighting democracies.

The General and I spoke in Chicago at Soldier Field; in Detroit, New York, and Buffalo. When Sikorski returned to London, I remained and made other speeches—including one at Humboldt Park in Chicago, which drew an audience of 230,000 on Polish National Day, May 3, 1941.

The Communist press lambasted me without letup. I was “an agent of British imperialism, attempting to force the United States into a war.” My speeches were sometimes distorted. My only theme, of course, was for the workers to resist Red sabotage and to continue to produce goods for the cause of democracy everywhere.

The neutrality of the United States at that time was none of my business, and I made a point of saying so wherever I spoke. I did predict that the weapons of warfare would be improved as the war in Europe progressed; that oceans would no longer protect countries; and that Berlin itself would eventually be bombed—“an attack on the heart of an octopus, which will then be forced to draw in its tentacles wherever they may have spread.”

Immediately after our encouraging visit to the White House, Sikorski and I went to Palm Beach, Florida, where Mr. Paderewski, still head of our parliament-in-exile, was slowly recovering from the combined rigors of his great age and the hardships he had undergone, including internment in Spain on his way from Switzerland to America.

What a great old man he was! He was an artist to the tips of his fingers. The day that we called on him he was preparing to go on the air with other leaders of conquered countries. Almost until it was time to speak, he sat

there motionless, feebly scanning his script. But when his cue came, he spoke in a suddenly strong voice, letter perfect. It was a superb plea for the outraged democracies in a world threatened by totalitarian rule.

Paderewski wept from weakness when he finished. A reporter, touched by the scene, asked him gently if he would honor us, and perhaps take his own mind off his troubles, by playing for us.

Paderewski looked at the young man with great sadness and, with the tears coming from his eyes, said quietly, "I cannot play—so long as my country is not free."

It was the last time we were to see him. He died shortly thereafter from pneumonia—contracted while speaking, against doctors' orders, at a rally of Polish patriots in New Jersey. His last speech was a call for Polish volunteers.

I returned to London early in June, 1941, to hear astonishing reports from the Polish underground. Couriers brought word that relations between Germany and Russia had been deteriorating. Some portions of the underground reported that there would be no break, but others insisted this meant war between the two. They pointed to the German movement of huge masses of troops and equipment through western Poland. Added to these reports we received pamphlets put out by German Communists, urging Germany to "bleed white" the Western Powers, envisioning the day when a Communist Germany would rule western Europe and the day when the Ribbentrop-Molotov line would be the boundary between the USSR and a German communized Europe.

The thought of a war between Russia and Germany was alien to me. I felt that there was essentially no difference between the twin invaders. In talks with the press in Canada I predicted that the two would not fight. I based my belief also on the idea that Hitler's mind, however warped, could never prompt him to blunder into fighting Russia without first annihilating the west.

On June 22, 1941, however, Hitler did attack, and his forces rolled from eastern Poland to the gates of Moscow before being checked. His reason for attacking remained a mystery to most of us until the publication, much later, of his letter of June 21, 1941, to Mussolini:

Duce!

I am writing this letter to you at a moment when months of anxious deliberation . . . are ending in the hardest decision of my life. I believe—after seeing the latest

Russian situation map and after appraisal of numerous other reports—that I cannot take the responsibility of waiting longer and, above all, I believe there is no other way of obviating this danger—unless it be further waiting which, however, would necessarily lead to disaster in this or the next year at the latest.

England has lost this war. With the right of the drowning person, she grasps at every straw which, in her imagination, might serve as a sheet anchor. Nevertheless, some of her hopes are naturally not without a certain logic. England has thus far always conducted her wars with help from the Continent. The destruction of France—in fact, the elimination of all west-European positions—is directing the glances of the British warmongers continually to the place from which they tried to start the war: to Soviet Russia.

Both countries, Soviet Russia and England, are equally interested in a Europe fallen into ruin, rendered prostrate by a long war. Behind these two countries stands the North American Union goading them on and watchfully waiting. Since the liquidation of Poland, there is evident in Soviet Russia a consistent trend, which, even if cleverly and cautiously, is nevertheless reverting firmly to the old Bolshevik tendency to expansion of the Soviet State.

Hitler went on to explain that he could not commit his air force to an invasion of England—a “much greater project” than Crete—as long as the Russians were tying up German forces in the east.

The letter continued:

The concentration of Russian forces—I had General Jodl submit the most recent map to your Attaché here, General Maras—is tremendous. Really, all available Russian forces are at our border. . . . If circumstances should give me cause to employ the German air force against England, there is danger that Russia will then begin its strategy of extortion in the South and North, to which I would have to yield in silence, simply from a feeling of air inferiority. . . . If I do not wish to expose myself to this danger, then perhaps the whole year of 1941 will go by without any change in the general situation. On the contrary, England will be all the less ready for peace for it will be able to pin its hopes on the Russian partner. Indeed, this hope must naturally even grow with the progress in preparedness of the Russian armed forces. And behind this is the mass delivery of war material from America which they hope to get in 1942. . . .

A withdrawal on my part would . . . entail a serious loss of prestige for us. This would be particularly unpleasant in its possible effect on Japan. I have, therefore, after constantly racking my brains, finally reached the decision to cut the noose before it can be drawn tight. I believe, Duce, that I am hereby rendering probably the best possible service to our joint conduct of the war this year. . . .

Whether or not America enters the war is a matter of indifference, inasmuch as she supports our opponents with all the power she is able to mobilize. The situation

in England itself is bad; the provision of food and raw materials is growing steadily more difficult. The martial spirit to make war, after all, lives only on hopes. These hopes are based solely on two assumptions: Russia and America. We have no chance of eliminating America. But it does lie in our power to exclude Russia. The elimination of Russia means, at the same time, a tremendous relief for Japan in East Asia, and thereby the possibility of a much stronger threat to American activities through Japanese intervention.

I have decided under these circumstances, as I already mentioned, to put an end to the hypocritical performance in the Kremlin. As far as the war in the East is concerned, Duce, it will surely be difficult, but I do not entertain a second doubt as to its great success. . . . We have built up a defense that will—or so I think—prevent the worst. Moreover, it is the duty of our armies to eliminate this threat as rapidly as possible.

If I waited until this moment, Duce, to send you this information, it is because the final decision itself will not be made until 7 o'clock tonight. I earnestly beg you, therefore, to refrain, above all, from making any explanation to your Ambassador at Moscow, for there is no absolute guarantee that our coded reports cannot be decoded. . . .

Whatever may now come, Duce, our situation cannot become worse as a result of this step; it can only improve. Even if I should be obliged at the end of this year to leave 60 or 70 divisions in Russia, that is only a fraction of the forces that I am now continually using on the Eastern front. Should England nevertheless not draw any conclusions from the hard facts that present themselves, then we can, with our rear secured, apply ourselves with increased strength to the dispatching of our opponent. I can promise you, Duce, that what lies in our German power, will be done. . . .

In conclusion, let me say one more thing, Duce. Since I struggled through to this decision, I again feel spiritually free. The partnership with the Soviet Union, in spite of the complete sincerity of the efforts to bring about a final conciliation, was nevertheless often very irksome to me, for in some way or other it seemed to me to be a break with my whole origin, my concepts, and my former obligations. I am happy now to be relieved of these mental agonies.

With hearty and comradely greetings,

Your
Adolf Hitler

And in this mood Hitler made probably the worst military blunder in history.

Chapter Three

ALLY

Russia is churlish about our aid

Our officers are missing

Stalin wants the Polish East

Appeasement grows



It now plainly became the task of Poland to aid to the best of its ability the same Red forces that had stabbed at our back in 1939, consumed the eastern half of our country, packed off about 250,000 of our troops to Russian prisoner-of-war camps and deported 1,500,000 Polish civilians to Russian slave camps.

There was no hesitation. Our cabinet in London met on the day Hitler attacked Stalin's forces and tried to make its pledges of cooperation heard above the happy sound of Mr. Churchill welcoming the Russians to the Allied camp and the less enthusiastic statement by United States Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. Churchill was little short of rapturous. Welles asserted that while Communist doctrines were regarded by the USA as intolerable as those of nazism, the immediate issue was whether Hitler's systematic plan for universal conquest and enslavement of the peoples could be defeated.

"In the opinion of this Government," Welles declared, "any rallying of the forces opposing the German leaders will therefore be to the benefit of our own defense and security." The following day the United States released all frozen Russian assets in America.

Our own tempered sympathies lay wholly with the Russians. Polish under-

ground reports from the German-occupied section of our country had begun to be epics of brutality, far surpassing the reports of inhuman treatment given to Poles in the Russian-occupied zone.

The underground kept us steadily supplied with information and made us wonder if Nazis were made in the image of human beings. We knew that Greiser, Gauleiter of Warthegau, had ruled that, "All gentleness toward Poles must be avoided and loathing for the Poles sown in every German heart." We knew that Hans Frank, Governor General at Cracow, had buttressed this by stating, "Adolf Hitler is called on to be the master of the world, and the greatest gift that God can give to man is to be born a German." We had copies of the *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* of Poznań, dated May, 1941, asserting, "We [the Germans] do not admit the right of the Poles to life in any form." Again, Greiser said, "God has helped us to conquer the Polish nation, which must now be destroyed; no Pole must have the right to own any land or house in Poland. In ten years the fields of Poland will be heavy with stacked wheat and rye, raised and harvested by Germans, but not a Pole will remain."

The Nazis were carrying out savage mass punishments, public executions, and imprisonments for sabotage and for listening to Allied radio stations. There were shootings and hangings in the streets of all Polish cities. Polish businesses, farms large and small, in the part of Poland incorporated into the Reich, were being seized and turned over to Germans. Efforts were being made to extirpate completely Polish national and cultural life. Palmiry, 15 miles from Warsaw, where the leaders of the Peasant Party and Socialist Party underground forces—Maciej Rataj and Mieczysław Niedziałkowski—had been executed, became known as the "village of death." More than six thousand innocent citizens there were shot and thrown into unmarked graves. Universities and high schools were closed; churches and shrines looted or seized; and between September, 1939, and January, 1941, 700 Polish priests were tortured to death. Jews were compressed into the ghettos and either murdered there or in the torture camp at Treblinka. We instructed our ambassador in Washington to report to the State Department: "There is not a single principle of the right of human beings nor a single clause of positive international law that has not been ground underfoot."

After our cabinet met in London, General Sikorski beamed a broadcast to Poland. Our country, he said, did not rule out the possibility of an understand-

ing with its former enemy—Russia. Poland had a logical right to assume that Russia would cancel the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 and return to the old Polish-Russian position recognized in the 1921 Treaty of Riga. This would mean that there could be a new beginning in Polish-Russian relations; it also meant the possibility of real collaboration between the two countries in the common fight.

Unlike Britain and the United States, however, we had certain conditions to present to the Russians in exchange for our pledge of support. The conditions we offered were generous. We ruled out reparations and indemnities, though entitled to both. We promised to forgive, if not forget.

To our astonishment, when we sat down with Russian Ambassador Ivan Maisky in London to draw up a new pact, we learned that Russia was not willing to accept our modest claims.

Stunned, we asked the British to help us obtain our minimum demands. When we protested that we were only asking for a return to the prewar *status quo*, we were told to remain silent in the interests of "Allied unity"—a phrase used repeatedly thereafter in good faith by the Western Powers, but one that was to be abused by the Russians. So we, engaged in a deadly fight with the Nazis, were obliged to remain silent about the Ally of our Allies—Soviet Russia.

In the pact that Sikorski signed with Maisky in London on July 30, 1941, the Russians renounced the territorial changes in Poland previously recognized in the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939. Furthermore, the Russians agreed to restore diplomatic relations with the Polish government in London, to help build a Polish army on Soviet soil under the operational command of the USSR, and to grant "amnesty" to all Polish citizens deprived of their freedom on Russian territory.

"A valuable contribution to the Allied cause," Eden said enthusiastically of the Sikorski-Maisky Agreement. At the same time Eden also wrote a note to Sikorski, which contained a sentence that was later to haunt the British conscience: "I also desire to assure you that His Majesty's Government do not

¹ The complete text of this pact is given in the appendix, p. 259. Subsequent reference to complete documents will be indicated by small numbers in the body of the book which correspond to the numbers of the documents appearing in numerical order in the appendix (pp. 259 to 298).

recognize any territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August, 1939."

General Sikorski replied immediately, for he had had occasion to doubt the sincerity of Russian territorial intentions in Poland.

"The Polish government take note of Your Excellency's letter dated July 30, 1941," Sikorski wrote, "and desire to express sincere satisfaction at the statement that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom do not recognize any territorial changes which have been effected in Poland since August 1939."

The stark truth, however, is that we were completely unable to pin down Maisky on the matter of prewar eastern boundaries. We had asked for Russia's recognition of the 1921 boundaries by name, not just a dissolution of the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. In addition, we had fought against the inclusion of the word "amnesty" in the Agreement, for this word made it appear that Russia was acting magnanimously in releasing 1,500,000 Polish citizens, who had in fact been carried off into slavery.

We failed in our arguments, and subsequently we could not raise our voices. "Allied unity" was our muzzle. In protest three members of our cabinet resigned. The rest of us stayed on, hoping that the implications of the ominous handwriting could be changed. We approved the Agreement as written because we knew that we could get nothing better. We approved it knowing that the lives of 1,500,000 Poles inside Russia were in peril. Without an agreement there would have been no restoration of Soviet-Polish relations; no official government to fight for the enslaved, who might, under the Russian type of justice, have been sentenced as enemy spies.

General Sikorski, a great statesman as well as a military man, earnestly believed that the solution of this friction lay in the camaraderie of arms. He dreamed of the day when Polish armies, re-formed in Russia, would fight at the side of Red Army men, and that in battle against a common foe the two groups would be united as brothers.

With that in mind he arranged a Polish-Soviet military agreement, which was signed in Moscow on August 14, 1941. In this pact it was agreed that a Polish Army would be organized immediately in Russia; that the army would be part of the sovereign forces of Poland; that Polish soldiers in Russia would receive the pay, rations, and maintenance accorded the Red Army; and, finally,

that Russia, aided by such Lend-Lease as Poland was to receive from the United States, would outfit and feed the Polish Army in Russia.

Though a sick man, Stanislaw Kot had flown across German-occupied Norway to get to his post as our Ambassador to Russia and was busy trying to arrange for the release of, and the caring for, the multitudes of Poles imprisoned in the Soviet Union. General Władysław Anders, who had been named Commander in Chief of the Polish Army in Russia by General Sikorski, scoured the country for his old troops and other Poles fit to fight.

Both Kot and Anders immediately ran into trouble. The August 12, 1941, Decree signed by President Kalinin was direct enough: "An amnesty is granted to all Polish citizens on Soviet territory at present deprived of their freedom as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds." Yet Kot soon informed us that many of the labor-camp commanders were refusing to yield the Polish men and women they had enslaved. Anders was puzzled by the small number of Polish officers who reported to him when he issued word to various prisoner-of-war camps that the military forces of Poland were reorganizing on Soviet soil. In Moscow a representative of the American Red Cross was rebuffed three times when he sought permission to provide food, clothing, and medical supplies for the Polish civilians being released. The Soviet authorities made no secret of the fact that they regarded the Red Cross as a foreign agent bent upon spying and meddling with the domestic affairs of the USSR.

This attitude of our new ally, directed toward a nation that now wanted only to help, was soon to become a source of alarm. We hoped for a clearing of the atmosphere after the ocean meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill, the result of which was the Atlantic Charter. Our hopes naturally increased with the formal acceptance of that loftily worded agreement by the Russians a short time later.

The Charter is, of course, familiar to all. I shall quote short portions of it and excerpts from the endorsement given it later by the USSR only to highlight its subsequent frustration in the case of Poland:

The Charter called for "no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned" and for the "right of all peoples" to choose the type of government under which they will live. It promised that "sovereign rights and self-government will be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

A month later at St. James Palace in London Ambassador Maisky signified Russia's intention of abiding by this new, world bill of rights. Maisky denounced "all and any attempts of aggressive powers to impose their will upon other peoples."

"The Soviet Union believes in the principle of self-determination of nations. It defends the right of every nation to the independence and territorial integrity of its country, and its right to establish such a social order and to choose such a form of government as it deems opportune. It proclaims its agreement with the fundamental principles of the declaration of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill."

Our efforts to prompt the British and United States governments to impress on the Russian mind that Poland, too, was entitled to the benefits of such pledges were generally without avail. Neither country was in a mood to speak bluntly to the Kremlin, though Russia, now in pell-mell retreat before the advancing German forces, might have been more attentive at that time. The Red Army was in sore need of Allied aid. The best we could get out of Washington was a short statement by Welles that it was the understanding of the United States that the Polish-Soviet Pact meant that our country's old borders would be reestablished after the war. In the House of Commons, Eden said, "There is . . . no guarantee of frontiers." There appeared to be widespread fear in British official circles that Russia might capitulate to Germany if too much pressure of a political nature was brought to bear upon Stalin.

This was a difficult time for us in London. Prohibited from making even the mildest protests over what was taking place in Russian-Polish relations, we were forced to sit by and watch Russia hailed more and more throughout the world as a "democratic, liberal government." Hats were thrown into the air in the democracies when Russia announced that it would permit Polish Catholic and Jewish chaplains to administer to the spiritual needs of the army we were forming to aid the Russians. Stalin was widely lauded for his "religious tolerance," but as a matter of fact we got few chaplains. Our own long efforts—and frequent rebuffs—to arrange for these chaplains to attend the needs of our men were of course overlooked.

Lend-Lease shipments for Poland, to be routed wherever Poles fought, began in September, 1941, with a notation by President Roosevelt that "this action demonstrates our intention to give material support to the fighting

determination of the Polish people to establish once again the independence of which they were so inhumanly deprived."

Simultaneously, Ambassador Kot had been making repeated requests of the Kremlin to gain an audience with Stalin in order to ask the Red chieftain to speed the release of Polish nationals still held by the Russians despite the amnesty order. Kot got as far as Vishinsky on September 27, 1941, and October 7, and on October 13 was forced to send Vishinsky a stiff note² about the thousands of Poles who had never been told that the amnesty of July, 1941, covered them. For Vishinsky's benefit Kot indicated by list a number of locations where Polish citizens were being held in prison. They ranged from Górki and Saratov to the compulsory labor camps of Yakut in eastern Asia, and from Chelyabinsk to the far-northern parts of the Republic of Komi. Kot also pointed out that the organization of the Polish Army in the USSR was not progressing in accordance with the spirit of the July Agreement. Polish citizens, he pointed out, had been enrolled in the Red Army and later transferred to so-called "labor battalions" instead of being directed into the Polish Army.

Of equal concern to us in London at this time were disquieting reports from General Anders that few, if any, officers were reporting to him at his headquarters at Buzuluk. On October 15, 1941, General Sikorski expressed this uneasiness over what was destined to become an evil history in a note to Russian Ambassador Bogomolov, Russia's envoy to the several exile governments stationed in London:

"The fate of several thousand Polish officers who have not returned to Poland and who have not been found in Soviet military camps continues to remain uncertain.

"They are probably dispersed in the northern districts of the USSR. Their presence in the Polish Army camps is indispensable.

"May I also request Your Excellency to draw the attention of the Soviet government to the necessity of increasing the aid essential to the formation and development of this army.

"At the same time I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that in view of existing military operations I have issued instructions to intensify sabotage and subversive activities by Poles in German-occupied Poland."

Bogomolov replied a month later:

"I am instructed by the Soviet Government to inform you, Mr. Prime

Minister, that all Polish citizens to be set free in accordance with the Decree have been set free, and certain specified categories of those released have received material help from the Soviet Authorities.

"All Polish officers on the territory of the U.S.S.R. have also been set free. Your supposition, Mr. Prime Minister, that a large number of Polish officers are dispersed throughout the Northern regions of the U.S.S.R. is obviously based on inaccurate information. . . .

"The Soviet Government have taken special note of your statement, Mr. Prime Minister, concerning your instructions for the intensification of sabotage and subversive action in German-occupied Poland."

Ambassador Kot finally was granted an audience with Stalin on November 14, 1941. Molotov was also present. Kot immediately brought up the question of the missing Polish officers.

Stalin looked surprised. "Are there still Poles who have not been liberated?" he asked.

"Many," Kot said. "We are particularly concerned with the cases of about 15,000 officers who were detained in the Starobielsk, Kozielsk and Ostashkov camps. They were transferred to an unknown destination in the spring of 1940, and only between 350 and 400 have reported to General Anders."

"Our amnesty knows no exceptions," Stalin said. He ground out his cigarette and picked up a phone. Then he made a personal inquiry of someone about the officers. Stalin listened to a voice on the other end of the line for some time, without changing his expression, then hung up and refused to speak about the officers during the rest of the meeting.

The sinister truth was beginning to dawn. The Polish underground had informed us that mail from the officers to their families in Poland had abruptly ceased in March, 1940. It was a truth we did not wish to face, and we prayed that it was more fear than fact.

General Sikorski flew to Moscow early in December, 1941, in the hope that by discussing the situation with Stalin, man to man, he could bring about a change in the incredible treatment of the nationals of one Ally by the officials of another. Our offices in London had been swamped by heartbreaking communications from Polish civilians who had been released from slave camps. We had been supplied with photographic evidence of starvelings from which the eye recoiled and with statistics of death rates that shocked the mind.

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Sikorski believed that Stalin, as a hard-pressed military man, could be persuaded to shed light on the missing Polish officers who, Sikorski knew, could be counted upon to create a strong Polish striking force. He hoped, too, to be able to remove the obstacles preventing the supplying of the Polish Army in Russia. General Anders had reported to us that supplies for these Poles were so short that three soldiers were existing on a single soldier's rations; that training conditions were deplorable, equipment atrocious, and the hardships great enough to discourage all but the confirmed patriot.

What Sikorski could not know, as he flew from Kuibyshev to Moscow protected by Russian fighter planes, was that the desperately needed American relief supplies to the hundreds of thousands of liberated Polish nationals in Russia were about to be cut off by the Soviet officials for internal political reasons. The packages and tin containers were so elegant by Russian standards that Russian citizens had been heard to doubt that America was the capitalistic monster they had been told!

What Sikorski also could not know in advance was the impending expulsion of most of the Polish Army units from Russia, the fate of the missing officers, and the pitiless cynicism of the Kremlin. This cynicism existed even though the roar of German cannonading could be heard in the streets of frozen, blacked-out Moscow as Sikorski drove to Stalin's headquarters.

"Your officers?" Stalin asked, in response to Sikorski's first question. "They were liberated. They just have not yet reached your quarters. Maybe they're somewhere in Manchuria."

Sikorski insisted that this could not be possible; that thousands of Polish officers wandering about in Russia would be readily spotted. He added that if they were at liberty in Russia, they would eagerly rejoin the fight against nazism.

"They may have escaped." Stalin shrugged his shoulders, and as had been the case during his interview with Kot, he refused to deal further with the matter. Though rebuffed, Sikorski stayed on on military matters. He took this occasion to compliment the valor of General Anders, who sat at his side in Stalin's study. He reminded Stalin that Anders had been wounded eight times in the fight against the combined Nazi and Red forces in 1939 and had then been arrested by the Russians when he sought to go to London to continue the fight.

Stalin looked solemnly at Anders. ^

"How long were you in prison?" he asked the Commander in Chief of the army we were trying to form to help save Russia.

"Twenty months," Anders answered evenly.

"Were you treated well?" Stalin asked.

"I was not," Anders answered directly. "I was treated very badly in the camp in Lwów. In Moscow it was a little better, if the word 'better' can be used."

Stalin looked back at him and shrugged his shoulders again. "Such were the conditions," he finally said.

Before the long night was over, Stalin agreed to outfit our forces more adequately. He bawled out General Panfilov, his Deputy Chief of Staff, for ignoring his orders to supply the Polish troops, many of whom were shoeless and many quartered in stoveless tents in subzero weather.

The following night, December 4, 1941, with the Germans only a few miles from Moscow, Stalin entertained Sikorski lavishly at a Kremlin dinner. At the height of the party, however, when Sikorski believed he had found some mellowness in the man, Stalin turned to him and said:

"Now we will talk about the frontier between Poland and Russia."

German tanks were at this moment maneuvering just outside the capital. The Red Army had not ceased retreating since the previous June. Many bureaus of the Soviet government had fled far to the east, to Kuibyshev. Sikorski displayed his surprise.

"I have no authority to discuss such matters," he said. "I hardly believe this is the time, anyway."

Stalin insisted and reinsisted, and eventually Sikorski replied:

"Poland assumes that the prewar boundaries will prevail, once the war is won."

Stalin shook his head.

"I'd like to have some alterations in those frontiers," he said. He smiled a little. "They'll be very slight alterations."

Sikorski managed to evade the matter, and later that night he signed with Stalin one of the many declarations that were to mean so little to us. This Declaration⁸ again promised full military collaboration in the war against Hitler, punishment of Nazi criminals, and a just and neighborly postwar world.

From such an atmosphere Sikorski flew back to London. During this very

visit to Moscow Stalin was establishing the "Union of Polish Patriots" at Saratov under the leadership of a Polish woman, the Communist writer Wanda Wasilewska, a "colonel" in the Red Army and a member of the Supreme Soviet Council. At the time of the crushing of Poland by the combined Nazi-Red forces, this iron-faced woman wrote a book proclaiming Russia as her "fatherland."

Such was the beginning of the Lublin government. It was the beginning of the police state that "liberated" Poland was to become.

Sikorski had made a reasonable suggestion to Stalin during their military talks. In view of the fact that conditions among the Polish troops in Russia were severe and since there were insufficient Polish officers to command them, he suggested that 20,000 of these men be permitted to travel to England where there were sufficient officers to train them, and that Polish officers in England should be sent to the USSR to help train our men there.

Stalin said he would take the matter into consideration. In the face of difficulties, General Anders nevertheless raised an army of almost 80,000 Poles in Russia—the equivalent of eight divisions. Russia provided supplies for only 40,000 of them. Some were forced to go without food for a week at a stretch.

The status of the Polish civilians in Russia deteriorated during the winter of 1941-1942. Some who were released from slavery were immediately arrested and sent back to camps without trials. Many were executed for sabotage. The infant mortality rate during that winter reached 80 per cent. We were able eventually to place several thousand Polish relief workers among these million Poles. Such reports as the relief workers were able to get back showed that our people had been reduced to the borderline of animal life by starvation, work, and terror. The Russians had taken pains, it appeared, to place the most intelligent of the Poles in the most menial, manual labor. They turned mechanical engineers into ditchdiggers; doctors, scientists, and chemists they assigned to manure piles.

We in London could not raise our voices. Nothing was to be said that would embarrass Stalin. We were told to hold our peace, not only in the face of the arrest of many relief workers, but also despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Poles were forced to become Russian citizens. Those who resisted were jailed, shot, or sent into the slower death of the labor camps.

In London Sikorski was informed by the British that they had learned from

the Russians that a large number of Polish Army units in Russia had been shipped to Teheran and North Africa "on request." Stalin, who had promised to provide for them, was now accusing them of cowardice.

We also learned from a Soviet news broadcast that "the question of frontiers between the USSR and Poland is not settled and is subject to settlement in the future."

With America now in the war we began to look to her to bring the necessary pressure to bear on Stalin. Even in a military dilemma creating doubt as to their survival, the Russians could, and did, act the part of conquerors in diplomatic circles. In 1942 Molotov felt secure enough in his position to tell Secretary of State Cordell Hull in Washington, when Hull questioned him about Soviet treatment of Poland, that it was none of his business. United States Ambassador to Moscow Admiral William H. Standley began having difficulty in seeing Molotov or Stalin when the subject dealt with anything except additional Lend-Lease supplies.

Appeasement of Russia grew by the hour both in London and Washington. To the anxious Poles in London it seemed as if both the British and American people felt shameful about their inability to open the second front for which Stalin now clamored. Communist propaganda, which stressed the activities of the Red Army and neglected all Russian depredations, made its weight felt in the Allied free press.

The picture of Russia became distorted. Ambassador Jan Ciechanowski reported from Washington that pro-Soviet elements had moved into important places in some of the United States war agencies and that any American who attempted to bring up such distasteful matters as, for instance, the cold-blooded murders of the Polish, Jewish Socialist leaders—Henryk Ehrlich and Wictor Alter—was pilloried as a "Fascist *saboteur* and German spy."

We finally protested to the United States State Department about the tone of the OWI broadcasts to Poland. Such broadcasts, which we carefully monitored in London, might well have emanated from Moscow itself. The Polish underground wanted to hear what was going on in the United States, to whom it turned responsive ears and hopeful eyes. It was not interested in hearing pro-Soviet propaganda from the United States, since that duplicated the broadcasts sent from Moscow.

We turned from Churchill to Roosevelt, then back to Churchill. They both were uniformly sympathetic but continued to impose silence upon us, as they

were reluctant to inject anything into their relations with Stalin that might displease him. Each counted upon making a personal plea to Stalin for Poland at a meeting—planned for the indefinite future—which Stalin continually postponed.

In the echelons beneath Churchill and Roosevelt our position became worse. We were told not to make any move or release any statement that might anger Stalin or give him an opportunity to break off relations with the Polish government in London. That imposed on us an increasingly unbearable muteness in the face of growing Soviet charges against us—including one that at first vaguely, and then sharply, accused Poland of imperialistic designs against the USSR.

Our own diplomatic protests to Moscow were generally ignored. When we took one problem to Washington, Welles suggested that General Sikorski make another visit to Stalin. We pointed out that such a move would be futile unless the General could go to Moscow with the written assurance that the United States stood behind him. Welles could give no such assurance.

We had thereafter to reckon with the Roosevelt administration's definite appeasement of Russia. It became a heavy cloud over our London efforts, but we tried to understand it—Russia was beginning to throw back the German forces, and the United States and Britain had been unable to open a second front.

By the end of 1942 the British government began to fear that Germany might abruptly negotiate a peace with the Red Army before British forces could step back on the Continent—a situation that would have irreparably damaged Britain's position in Europe.

The tone of official Russian replies to our repeated inquiries about the conditions under which our 1,500,000 nationals were living in the USSR, and the case of the still-missing officers took on a hostile note as 1942 progressed. On March 13 of that year, Bogomolov in a sharp reply to Polish Foreign Minister Edward Raczynski declared that the Soviet Union "cannot agree" with protests concerning the Polish citizens in the USSR and the missing officers.

We looked hopefully to Casablanca for a solution to our predicament. But after Roosevelt's return to Washington we were told that he considered the status of Russian-Polish relations so "delicate and difficult" that he did not choose to intervene at that time. He added that he could do nothing "except marvel at the workings of the Soviet mentality," and that he refused to restate

the principles of the Atlantic Charter to which Russia had subscribed. The best answer we got in Washington was, in effect, "Keep your shirt on."

Everything would be changed just as soon as Roosevelt and Churchill could sit down with Stalin—at Stalin's leisure. Everything!

On February 19, 1943, the *Radianska Ukraina* published an article by the playwright Korncytchuk, third husband of Wanda Wasilewska, putting into printed form for the first time Russia's bold claims in eastern Poland. The article presented the frontier question in such a way as to make it appear that Poland was laying wholly unjustified claims to Soviet territory. The article, of course, expressed an official view; else it could not have been published. We could not take its charges in silence, for to have done so would have been a tacit admission of guilt. On February 25 we sent a stiff note⁴ repudiating the malicious propaganda.

The complete anatomy of Russia's intentions was revealed in her cynical reply of March 2, 1943, which accused the Poles of favoring the "dismemberment" of Ukrainian and White Ruthenian lands and peoples. The Russians even had the gall to invoke the Atlantic Charter as justification for dividing Poland at the Curzon line.

Anger welled up in us from two years of silence in the face of lies and aggression, but we swallowed our bitterness in a reply of March 4, 1943,⁵ which pointed out that the Curzon line was originally proposed in 1919-1920 as an armistice line, not a frontier. There was no reply to this final note to Moscow. In London we waited for Russia to make the next move. But that move came from Germany. On April 13, 1943, the German radio announced the discovery in Katyń, near Smolensk, of eight mass graves containing thousands of the Polish officers for whom we had been searching since July of 1941. The German radio placed the blame on the Russians.

Chapter Four

KATYŃ

15,000 Polish prisoners of war dead

The Germans open the graves

German and Russian hypocrisy

Truth about the murders

Stalin said "Liquidate"



THE bare announcement by the German radio—on April 13, 1943—that the mass graves of “about ten thousand” Polish officers had been discovered near Katyń on April 12, 1943, was followed by a press conference at the Foreign Ministry in Berlin. It was a revolting story as outlined by the Germans, and though we in London were by nature skeptical of all German statements, their account of the Katyń atrocities tied up many of the loose ends of our own ceaseless search for our men.

It took the Russians three days to retort, during which time we dispatched underground units to the scene and confirmed at least the fact that the graves had been found. Our men reported that about four thousand bodies had been unearthed.

On April 15, 1943, the Moscow radio described the German charges as “vile fabrications.” It added:

“In the last two or three days the Goebbels’ liars have been distributing false stories about the mass murders of Polish officers by the Soviets in the spring of 1940 in the area of Smolensk. •

"In this new invention by the German Fascists, full of fabrications and lies, they mention the village of Gniezdovo. However, they remain silent on the fact that the village of Gniezdovo is well known as the site of archaeological excavations of the Gniezdovo burial mound. It is a place of well-known historical graves.

"Nobody will be misled by the lies and falsifications of the German Fascists."

In the hope of receiving an impartial appraisal of this appalling event, General Sikorski then made the decision to turn the matter over to the International Red Cross. On April 16, 1943, Polish Minister of National Defense, Lieutenant General Marian Kukiel issued the following summary and announcement:

On September 17, 1940, the official organ of the Red Army, the *Red Star*, stated that during the fighting which took place after September 17, 1939, 181,000 Polish prisoners of war were taken by the Soviets. Of this number about 10,000 were officers of the regular army and reserve.

According to information in possession of the Polish Government, three large camps of Polish prisoners of war were set up in the U.S.S.R. in November, 1939.

1. In Kozielsk, east of Smolensk
2. In Starobielsk, near Kharkov, and
3. In Ostashkov, near Kalinin, where police and military police were concentrated.

At the beginning of 1940 the camp authorities informed the prisoners in all three camps that all camps were about to be broken up and that they would be allowed to return to their home and families. Allegedly for this purpose, lists of places to which individual prisoners wished to go after their release were made.

At that time there were:

1. In Kozielsk, about 5,000 men, including some 4,500 officers.
2. In Starobielsk, about 3,920 men, including 100 civilians; the rest were officers, of whom there were some medical officers.
3. In Ostashkov, about 6,570 men, including some 380 officers.

On April 5, 1940, the breaking up of these camps was begun and groups of 60 to 300 men were removed from them every few days until the middle of May. From Kozielsk they were sent in the direction of Smolensk. About 400 people only were moved from all three camps in June, 1940, to Griazovietz in the Vologda district.

When after the conclusion of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30, 1941, and the signing of the Military Agreement of August 14, 1941, the Polish Government proceeded to form the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., it was expected that the officers from the above mentioned camps would form the cadres of senior and junior officers of the army in formation. At the end of August, 1941, a group of Polish

officers from Griazovietz arrived to join the Polish units in Buzuluk; not one officer, however, among those deported in other directions from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov appeared. In all, therefore, about 8,300 officers were missing, not counting 7,000 N.C.O.'s, soldiers and civilians, who were in those camps when they were broken up.

Ambassador Kot and General Anders, perturbed by this state of affairs, addressed to the competent Soviet authorities inquiries and representations about the fate of the Polish officers from the above mentioned camps.

In a conversation with Mr. Vishinsky, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on October 6, 1941, Ambassador Kot asked what had happened to the missing officers. Mr. Vishinsky answered that all prisoners of war had been freed from the camps and therefore they must be at liberty.

In October and November, in his conversations with Premier Stalin, Mr. Molotov and Mr. Vishinsky, the Ambassador on various occasions returned to the question of the prisoners of war and insisted upon being supplied with lists of them, such lists having been compiled carefully and in detail by the Soviet Government.

During his visit to Moscow, Prime Minister Sikorski in a conversation on December 3, 1941, with Premier Stalin, also intervened for the liberation of all Polish prisoners of war, and not having been supplied by the Soviet authorities with their lists, he handed to Premier Stalin on this occasion an incomplete list of 3,845 Polish officers which their former fellow-prisoners had succeeded in compiling. Premier Stalin assured General Sikorski that the amnesty was of a general and universal character and affected both military and civilians. On March 18, 1942, General Anders handed Premier Stalin a supplementary list of 800 officers. Nevertheless, not one of the officers mentioned in either of these lists has been returned to the Polish Army.

Besides these interventions in Moscow and Kuibyshev, the fate of Polish prisoners of war was the subject of several interviews between Minister Raczynski and Ambassador Bogomolov. On January 18, 1942, Minister Raczynski, in the name of the Polish Government, handed a note to Soviet Ambassador Bogomolov, drawing his attention once again to the painful fact that many thousand Polish officers had still not been found.

Ambassador Bogomolov informed Minister Raczynski on March 13, 1942, that in accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of August 12, 1941, and in accordance with the statements of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of November 8 and 19, 1941, the amnesty had been put into full effect, and that it related both to civilians and military.

On May 19, 1942, Ambassador Kot sent the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs a Memorandum in which he expressed his regret at the refusal to supply him with a list of prisoners, and his concern as to their fate, emphasizing the high value these officers would have in military operations against Germany.

Neither the Polish Government nor the Polish Embassy in Kuibyshev has ever

received an answer as to the whereabouts of the missing officers and other prisoners who have been deported from the three camps mentioned above.

We have become accustomed to the lies of German propaganda and we understand the purpose behind its latest revelations. In view, however, of abundant and detailed German information concerning the discovery of the bodies of many thousands of Polish officers near Smolensk, and the categorical statement that they were murdered by the Soviet authorities in the spring of 1940, the necessity has arisen that the mass graves should be investigated and the facts alleged verified by a competent international body, such as the International Red Cross. The Polish government has therefore approached this institution with a view to their sending a delegation to the place where the massacre of the Polish prisoners of war is said to have taken place.

The criminally hypocritical tone of the Nazi propaganda mills during these difficult days was too much to stomach. Then on April 17, 1943, the day after we made our appeal to the International Red Cross, the cabinet issued a communiqué⁶ summarizing the many Nazi mass atrocities that had been committed in Poland. We denied the Nazi claims to the role of defender of Christian Europe against the Russian east. But the explanation of Katyń offered on April 18 by the Soviet Information Bureau was just as unconvincing as the Nazi pretense to the title of defender of Western culture. Pompously the Russians proclaimed:

"The German-Fascist murderers, whose hands are stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, who methodically exterminate the populations of countries they have occupied without sparing children, women or old people, who exterminated many hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens in Poland itself, will deceive no one by their base lies and slanders,

"The hand of the Gestapo can easily be traced in this hideous frame-up. There were, in fact, some former Polish prisoners in 1941 in the area west of Smolensk [*Editor's note: a complete contradiction of Soviet statements that the men had been released*]. After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Smolensk they fell, together with many Soviet citizens, into the hands of the German-Fascist executioners.

"Some of them were killed immediately by the Germans. Others were left alive for a special occasion: this occasion has come now. German Fascists have shot thousands of unarmed people, supplied the bodies with touched-up documents, which came from Gestapo archives, and buried their victims on

Russian soil, using for this purpose the archaeological excavations of the Gniczdovo burial mound, the existence of which they are now ignoring.

"Thus the mystery becomes understandable. The Polish prisoners were murdered by the Germans, and this wholesale murder took place recently: that is why the bodies had not decomposed.

"The German Fascists, who have exterminated the Polish *intelligentsia*, who have turned the Polish nation into cattle, are now eager to come forward as Poland's protectors. Can one imagine the Germans as Poland's protectors? It is such nonsense that nobody in the world would believe it. By slandering the Soviet Union they want to make the whole world forget their crimes."

Pravda, on April 19, angrily declared that we of the Polish government-in-exile had "swallowed a carefully baited hook thrown out by the German propaganda agencies in order to conceal the Germans' own black record." We were "cooperating" with the "Hitlerite hangmen." Our appeal to the International Red Cross, the paper said officially, "constituted direct assistance to the enemy in the fabrication of a foul lie which will fill all people of common sense with repugnance. . . ."

The blow finally fell on April 25. It had, of course, been expected. But to use the Katyń incident as the pretext seemed to us in London the ultimate in cruelty. Molotov's manner as he handed the historic note⁷ to Polish Ambassador Tadeusz Romer reflected the hostility of the text, which ended by serving notice that the Soviet was severing relations with the Polish government.

The International Red Cross announced on April 27 that it would refuse to undertake the inquiry into the German charges "unless a corresponding invitation to do so was received from the Soviet government." By April 30 it was apparent to us that Stalin would never agree to deliver this case to neutral observers. So we announced through the Polish Telegraphic Agency that in view of the difficulties* confronting the IRC in complying with the Polish request the Polish government regarded the appeal as having lapsed.

The Germans went forward with their own probe, however. They created an international commission of physicians and university professors,* mainly from countries occupied by Hitler's forces.

The German-sponsored commission reported at the end of its study that

*The commission included Dr. Speleers, a Belgian, of the University of Ghent; Dr. Markov, a Bulgarian, of the University of Sofia; Dr. Tramsen, Denmark, Institute of

the officers had been murdered during March and April, 1940, at which time the territory in question was in Russian hands. In addition to the commission, a delegation of the Polish Red Cross from Cracow inspected the graves. The graves were also shown to groups of Polish, American, and British prisoners of war.

The full story of the murder of the officers has till now never been told. The irrefutable truth is that the officers were slaughtered in cold blood by Russians and by Russians only. Russian officials issued formal statements about the "liberation" of the officers for more than two years after they had been slaughtered in a scene that must have sickened Heaven.

The full story is this: The Red Army rounded up some 250,000 prisoners of war after the 1939 invasion of eastern Poland. These men were sent at first to nearly a hundred camps. Later, the enlisted men were separated from the officers. Some of these men were released and sent home; others were packed off to forced-labor camps; some incorporated into the Red Army; others allowed to return to the German-occupied zone of Poland, where the Germans put them into labor camps.

During the days of the Red-Nazi alliance the Germans never asked for the repatriation of Polish officers because under the Hague Convention it was not permissible to put an officer to work. The Nazis wanted only Poles who were fit for back-breaking manual labor.

The Polish officers eventually were placed in three main Russian camps. Between November, 1939, and the spring of 1940, the Kozielsk camp held 4,500 officers and cadet officers; Starobielsk held 3,920 officers and cadet officers; and Ostashkov held approximately 6,500 officers, military police, frontier guards, and policemen.

From April until June, 1940, the officers' camp at Pavlishtchev Bór received 245 men from Kozielsk, 79 from Starobielsk, and 124 men from Ostashkov—a total of 448. Between 350 and 400 of these officers were moved from Pavlishtchev Bór to Gruzovietz. They were the only ones of an original group of

Medicine, Copenhagen; Dr. Saxén, Finland, Helsinki University; Dr. Palmieri, Italy, University of Naples; Dr. Miloslavich, Yugoslavia, University of Agram; Dr. de Burlet, The Netherlands, University of Groningen; Dr. Hájek, Czechoslovakia, Charles University; Dr. Birkle, Rumania, Institute of Medicine and Criminology, Bucharest; Dr. Naville, Switzerland, University of Geneva; Dr. Subik, Czechoslovakia, University of Comenius; Dr. Orsos, Hungary, University of Budapest, and Dr. Costedoat, a medical inspector attached to the Vichy government.

14,920 at the three main camps to make their way to General Anders headquarters. They reported to him between August and September of 1941.

The rest of the prisoners of war—about 15,000—were murdered. They were murdered after being promised that they were being sent home to Poland. In November, 1939, the Russians began a series of screenings that grouped the officers by home provinces. They were permitted to write to their families, telling them of their expectation of an early return. The Polish Red Cross, working under the German occupation, made certain plans to receive them.

At the same time a series of secret conversations sealing their fate took place between the Germans and Russians. At the close of the Red-Nazi rape of Poland it had been agreed * that the Russians would return to the German-occupied zone of Poland all German nationals in their hands and that the Germans in turn would yield such Ukrainians and White Russians as they rounded up in their zone.

Early in 1940, however, the Russians complained to the Germans that the Nazis had gathered nearly thirty thousand Ukrainians into training camps, preparing them to join Hitler's armed forces. Most of them were in camps near Krosno and Zakopane. The Reds demanded the return of these men and offered in exchange to send back the Polish officers. An agreement was reached; hence the screening preparations for the return of the Polish officers.

At the last conceivable moment, the Germans remembered certain fundamental Nazi precepts. Among these were the need of *Lebensraum* but not of people, the planned extermination of the Polish intelligentsia, and the possibility that they might face later prosecution if they mistreated officers protected by the Hague Convention.

So the Germans informed the Russians that they would return 30,000 Ukrainians but did not want the Polish officers. Shortly thereafter in March, 1940, the Polish officers, who were so carefully segregated before that, were suddenly mixed together again. The three big camps began to be evacuated. The men from Kozielsk were taken by train to Gniezdovo, where a bus carted them in lots of thirty to the nearby forest for the mass executions.

Without exception all the victims whose bodies were found in the Katyń graves were shot through the back of the head, an almost official Russian form of liquidation. About two hundred fifty of the bodies had their hands tied behind their backs. The heads of others had been covered with their

* Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact—Confidential Protocol, September 28, 1939.

overcoats before the shootings. The ropes were Russian made. The men were killed by German revolvers, manufactured by Gustav Genschow and Company between 1922 and 1931. The guns were of a type exported to Russia and to the Baltic States.

Medical examination by a thirteen-nation board, predominantly from German-dominated countries, showed also that many of the men had struggled desperately against their executioners, a reaction that the Russians attempted to guard against by limiting each group of victims to about thirty, or fewer.

The Russians had made one great mistake, beyond the crime itself. The ground in which they placed the dead officers was of a peculiar composition that virtually mummified dead objects placed in it. What might have become unidentifiable skeletons in a few months remained well-preserved corpses with papers and other means of identification intact. Diaries, newspapers, and unmailed letters fixed the time of the murders. These papers proved that 4,143 men found in seven of the Katyń graves had been killed during April, 1940. About 110 others, found in the eighth grave, had been killed in May, 1940. Among the 4,253 bodies found were many whose names were on the lists that had been handed over to Stalin by Ambassador Kot, General Sikorski, and General Anders.

The discovered bodies were those of men who had been held in the Kozielsk camp. What had happened to the men from Ostashkov and Starobielsk?

Those from Ostashkov were sent first to Vyazma by train. They were removed from the train, put into automobiles, and driven away. Those from Starobielsk were moved at the same time—in April and May, 1940—to Kharkov by train. Autos picked them up at the station, and they, too, vanished.

Perhaps, one day, the forests near Vyazma and Kharkov will reveal the location of their graves. Those discoveries, when and if they come, will not make more palatable the fact that these men were in their graves when Molotov, Vishinsky, and Bogomolov were protesting repeatedly that they had been set free. They were in their graves when Stalin pretended to be solicitous about their welfare.

The Russians have never presented convincing evidence which would prove their innocence in the Katyń case. Long after the Nazi-sponsored investigation, they sent their own commission to Katyń. But this commission was made up exclusively of Soviet citizens. The Russians have never permitted a neutral or international board to take part in the scrutiny of the case. They did

not even permit their Lublin stooges to investigate the graves, but they did direct General Zygmunt Berling, a Polish Communist whom they had placed in charge of the Kościuszko Division of the Red Army, to speak on the site of the murders when the Red Army recovered that area in its counteroffensive.

On that occasion Berling condemned the Polish government in London for appealing to the International Red Cross for an impartial investigation. It must be pointed out here, however, that Berling knew as early as the spring of 1940 that the men had been murdered by the Russians. In the spring of 1940 the Russians discussed with a group of captured Polish officers, including Berling, the formation of Polish military units in the Red Army. Several Polish generals who refused to take part in these talks were badly mistreated, but Berling, by now craven enough to support the formation of Polish aid to an army that was allied with Hitler, asked permission to speak to the Polish officers in the camps at Ostashkov and Starobielsk.

Laventy Beria, chief of the NKVD and a party to these talks, promptly told Berling—in the presence of Beria's deputy Merkulov—that "unfortunately, these men are no longer available. A great mistake was made."

Upon my return to Red-dominated Poland in June, 1945, General Prosecutor Sawicki (whose real name is Reisler) approached me and asked if I thought it would be a good idea to stage a hearing that would acquit the Russians of the Katyń murders.

"Katyń stays in the hearts of the Polish people," the worried Communist said. "We should have a comprehensive hearing."

"Certainly," I replied. "Let us have a public trial and introduce all the proper documents. A fair trial will unquestionably prove the identity of the murderers."

Sawicki hesitated before asking me what I would be prepared to testify to if called to the stand.

"Only what I know," I answered. "I know positively that there was an agreement between the Germans and Russians concerning the exchange of Poles and Ukrainians and that the Germans would not accept the Polish officers offered in that exchange."

"I would testify, too, that we in London were repeatedly told by Russian officials that the men were at liberty when they were in truth foully murdered. And I would tell of the great efforts by the retreating Germans to salvage all documents pertaining to this crime."

Sawicki asked me what I knew about documents. His concern was obvious.

"The Katyń documents," I said, "were taken by the retreating Germans from Cracow to Wroclaw, from Wroclaw into Germany, and finally to Czechoslovakia, where there is indication that they were recovered by the American forces." I told him, too, of Polish Red Cross documents concerning Katyń that were also sent to the west.

Sawicki left me, mumbling that such testimony would not prove the identity of the murderers. He reported the conversation to the Polish Security Police, and then he and Minister of Justice Henryk Świątkowski flew to Moscow in the hope of improving their position as puppets of the Kremlin by outlining a planned hearing that would absolve Russia of all complicity in the murders. They were told to stop all such plans and to return to Warsaw.

The ghosts of the murdered officers filled the courtroom of the war criminal trials at Nuremberg and were ignored—another fateful and historic example of appeasement. The indictment against the Nazi war leaders made specific mention of the Katyń murders. Beyond that the word "Katyń" was rarely mentioned. The prosecution of German crimes in eastern Europe was handed to the Russian members of the International Tribunal.

Goering, Ribbentrop, and the others on trial were permitted to introduce the official German *White Book*, which accused the Russians of the murders, and to produce three defense witnesses.

The Russian prosecutor produced his own star witness—the Bulgarian Markov, associated with the University of Sofia as a professor whose specialty was the medical aspect of criminology. Dr. Markov had been used by the Nazis in 1943 as an official observer at the opening of the graves and had signed the report that accused the Russians of the crime. He now testified, however, that the Germans had permitted him to examine the bodies for only fifteen minutes and that he had been coerced at gun point into signing the report. The tribunal failed to take official note of the fact that Markov had been subsequently arrested by the NKVD when the Red Army entered Bulgaria, had been imprisoned for months, and was now telling an entirely different story than the one he had previously told.

The ultimate sentence of the Nazi war leaders eliminated all mention of Katyń, though it had been part of the indictment. Obliquely, then, the Germans—abundantly guilty as they were on other counts—were acquitted of killing the Polish officers.

But the blame has never been officially placed on the real murderers—the Russians. Nuremberg, the first such court of justice in the history of civilization, was not immune to further appeasement of Russia by her Allies.

The semiofficial Russian view now seems to be that Katyń resulted from a misunderstanding of an order signed by Stalin. Recently in London a Russian officer associated with the Soviet Embassy told a group that the Red Army must be absolved of the murders. He placed the blame on Stalin's stubborn refusal to delegate authority and the grim literal-mindedness of the Russian secret police.

This officer said that in Stalin's zeal to handle all military matters Stalin was as jealous of his role as was Hitler or Mussolini. This accounted for the fact that the Kremlin was often filled with officers of all ranks, waiting for personal instructions from Stalin.

As regards the Polish prisoners of war, an officer was dispatched to the Kremlin for advice. He eventually saw Stalin and briefly outlined the situation.

Stalin, according to the officer in London, took a piece of his personal stationery and wrote one word upon it, "Liquidate."

The officer returned to his Red Army headquarters with the one-word order, but after a meeting with other officers it was decided that this was a task for the NKVD, not the army.

"About a year later the Poles began to ask us about the fate of their officers," the Red Army man told his private group in London. "Finally they reached 'Our Father' Stalin and asked. 'Our Father' remembered his order but did not know how it had been carried out.

"So he picked up the telephone and asked the army for information. A staff officer explained what had happened, and Stalin became silent for he knew the ramifications of the word he had written.

"What does liquidate mean? It is an order that can be fulfilled in a number of ways, dependent often upon the interpretation of the agent involved. Those Polish officers could have been released under the meaning of the Stalin order. They could have been sent to other prisons, to work in a factory or quarry, or to Siberia. The NKVD took the direct meaning."

This is as much of an admission as probably will ever come from the mouth of a Russian of any importance. It confirms the Russian guilt and carps only about the method by which the death sentence was fulfilled. But the order—"Liquidate"—was signed by Stalin himself.

Chapter Five

LOSS OF A PATRIOT AND MORE

Sikorski dies

I am named Prime Minister

Teheran decisions

Bierut goes to Warsaw



THE rupture of Polish-Soviet relations in April, 1943, did not stop Poland's participation in the war against Hitler and our efforts to reestablish our relations with the Kremlin in the interests of Allied unity. Three days after the break, General Sikorski formally denied the Russian charges that we sought any part of Soviet territory, reminded Stalin that thousands of our men were still fighting the common foe, and pledged that Poland would continue to live up to the pacts that it had signed with Russia to prosecute the war and to restore Polish independence after the war.

Stalin made no direct reply, but on May 4, 1943, in the course of answering two questions submitted to him by the Moscow correspondent of the *London Times* and *The New York Times* the Marshal explained himself:

Question: Does the government of the U.S.S.R. desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitlerite Germany?

Stalin: Unquestionably, it does.

Question: On what fundamentals is it your opinion that relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war?

Stalin: Upon the fundamentals of solid good neighborly relations and mutual re-

spect, or, should the Polish people so desire, upon the fundamentals of an alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland.

General Sikorski took note of that.

"It is difficult for me not to show reserve," he said, "even in the face of such a favorable declaration by Premier Stalin, at the very moment when the Polish Ambassador has been forced to leave Russia and the masses of Polish population in USSR are left without the care and assistance of their government."

General Sikorski kept up his efforts to heal the breach until the end of his life—an end that saw this patriot vilified in the Red press and his reputation as head of the Polish government eaten away by the Kremlin's open encouragement of the Union of Polish Patriots in the Soviet Union. This Communist group became emboldened enough to announce its plans for "postwar Poland."

Before General Sikorski took off on his last flight—an inspection trip of our army in the Middle East—he asked both the British and American governments to intercede with Stalin and arrange for a Sikorski-Stalin meeting. When the two governments attempted the role of mediator in this crisis, they were successful only in redoubling the Soviet press attack on our leader. As he flew to Iraq to inspect troops, he was branded a "Fascist" and accused of "playing into the hands of the Germans."

The General journeyed to Cairo and then to Gibraltar. Even at Gibraltar, in the last hours of his life, he found trouble with the Russians. Russian Ambassador Maisky was the guest of the British governor that same day, and the General was placed in a portion of the governor's house where he would not meet Maisky.

At 11 P.M. on July 4, 1943, Sikorski's Liberator plane struggled heavily off the short runway at Gibraltar, as if driven by a sudden gust, and plummeted into the water at full power.

He, his daughter, all of his staff, and a British M.P., Victor Cazalet (attached to him by Churchill), went to their deaths. The only survivor was his Czech pilot.

Poland and the world lost a great man.

On July 6, after King George VI had expressed his deep regret over the death of our leader, a moving tribute was paid to him by Churchill.

"I was often brought into contact with General Sikorski," Churchill told the House of Commons. "I had a high regard for him and admired his poise

and calm dignity amid so many trials and baffling problems. He was a man of remarkable preeminence, both as statesman and soldier.

"His agreement with Marshal Stalin of July 30, 1941, was an outstanding example of his political vision. Until the moment of his death he lived in the conviction that all else must be subordinated to the needs of the common struggle and in the faith that a better Europe will arise in which a great and independent Poland will play an honorable part.

"We British here and throughout the Commonwealth and Empire, who declared war on Germany because of Hitler's invasion of Poland and in fulfillment of our guarantee, feel deeply for our Polish Allies in their new loss. We express our sympathy to them; we express our confidence in their immortal qualities; and we proclaim our resolve that General Sikorski's work shall not have been done in vain."

The Russians who had condemned him only a few days before now hypocritically spoke of him as a great man, a view held by other Allies and expressed sincerely by them.

I saw Churchill on July 8, 1943, at 10 Downing Street and thanked him for his eulogy.

"I delivered that address not only because of General Sikorski but because of Poland," the Prime Minister replied. "I loved that man. He was one of the truly great statesmen of this war. And I love Poland. At the moment Hitler attacked your country I demanded that Great Britain declare war immediately.

"I will fight for the freedom of Poland. I will fight for a strong and independent Poland, and I'll never cease fighting for it."

Our talk turned to the difficult situation between Russia and Poland.

"The Russians are a strange people," Churchill sighed. "Sometimes one cannot understand them. Their wild, primitive nature so often makes itself apparent." Later he was to say: "I remember once, when Stalin was my guest, he behaved so brutally and was so lacking in tact that I had to speak sharply to him. I had to be rude myself.

"We'll have many troubles with them," Churchill continued, "believe me. But also believe me when I say that I'll always be on your side."

In this atmosphere of broken Soviet-Polish relations I was named Prime Minister on July 14, 1943. We had first sought and obtained the endorsement of our parliament from the Polish underground by radio contacts from London.

Conditions in our underground were of tremendous concern. In addition to the troubles of operating a clandestine force constantly under attack by Hitler's armed forces and the ferreting of the Gestapo, we were oppressed by the first stirrings of Soviet aid. The Reds were dropping parachutists into Poland, not to render us the needed military and moral support, but to prepare the way for the coming political domination of our country. They came primarily armed with propaganda. Their physical help consisted mainly of an occasional grenade thrown clumsily into a house or meeting at which Germans (and sometimes Poles) were present.

The Polish government sought consistently to harmonize its underground fight with that of the Red Army. In December, 1941, during his visit to Moscow, General Sikorski drew up an agreement with General Zhukov. The agreement called for harmony of action within Poland and was verbally agreed to by Zhukov, an NKVD general serving as liaison officer with the Polish Army. But when Sikorski returned to London, he was informed that Stalin had rejected the agreement.

Despite the formal rejection Stalin did drop parachutists into Poland, and before the end of December, 1941, the commander of these men had been contacted by the chief of our Home Army forces, General Grot-Rowecki. This commander also submitted to Stalin through London the Polish request for closer teamwork, but the only thing we gained was Stalin's permission for our underground to keep him informed of its military operations. The Russians agreed to accept valuable information concerning Nazi military activities but offered no collaboration with the providers of that intelligence.

At the end of 1942 the German command in Poland began evacuating thousands of Poles from the Lublin area and replacing them with Germans from Bessarabia and the Baltic States. Sikorski at this time was in Mexico, arranging for the transfer to Mexico of Polish children marooned in the USSR and Iran. As acting Prime Minister I issued an order to the underground to resist the Germans in the Lublin region openly. Our men gave a good account of themselves, and the Germans stopped these mass transfers.

This seemed a propitious time for our new Ambassador to Moscow, Tadeusz Romer, who had replaced Kot, to approach Stalin once again and ask for the cooperation and material aid that would have expanded our ability to fight.

"The time is not ripe; I would be sorry to see any more Polish blood shed," Stalin told Romer, rejecting his proposals.

In 1943 when I came into office, the Soviet-Polish relations were already broken and the Soviet aid was more hindrance than support. When one Communist grenade was thrown, perhaps killing a few Germans, the Germans would then line up as many as a hundred Poles as hostages and shoot them. When a Polish family harbored some Red parachutist who had sought such help and then been discovered, the entire family would be liquidated. On a number of occasions entire villages were burned in reprisal.

Yet it was my obligation to refashion some kind of relationship between Poland and Russia. Our troops and the Red Army were conducting separate actions against the common enemy. About one million of our people, seized and herded into Russia when the Red Army invaded Poland in 1939, were still in the USSR's slave camps and deprived—because relations had been ruptured—of the aid we were now in a position to send to them. These things I had in mind when I made my first speech as Prime Minister.

After paying tribute to my beloved predecessor and noting our fortunate friendship with Great Britain and the United States, I announced the Polish government's recognition of the French Committee of National Liberation—a recognition born of the close collaboration between French and Polish underground units—and commented on the recent agreement we had concluded in London calling for close postwar collaboration with Czechoslovakia.

I added, however:

It would be unfounded to suppose that we have in mind the creation of some *cordon sanitaire*. A central-European organization would have to work together with Russia on friendly terms, both in the economic and political spheres. Difficulties arising out of the past are great, but can be swept aside by good will on both sides.

My chief concern was, naturally, the Polish-Soviet crisis. I told the members of the Polish parliament that the Polish government desired a permanent understanding with the USSR.⁸

In my first meetings with Eden as Prime Minister I brought up such questions as our underground's growing need of supplies from Allied arsenals and sought to make contact with the estranged Russians through the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

Most importantly, I sought Eden's aid in the establishment of a Big Three commission to be attached to the Red Army as it swept back over Poland,

provided, of course, that Polish-Soviet relations had not been healed at the time of this advance across our country.

I offered to parachute into Poland, along with some members of my cabinet, if enough aid could be brought to the Polish Home Army to enable it to stage a country-wide uprising against the Germans.

I asked also for Allied liaison officers to help coordinate the activities of the Poles with those of the Red Army, which eventually would strike the Germans on our territory—a fight in which we were eager to join.

Eden promised to take up the matter with Churchill and other Allied leaders. As matters turned out, only a few liaison officers—all British—actually got to Poland to discover the true nature of its liberation by the Red Army. The Big Three commission was never realized, for the simple reason that the British, whom I had asked to propose it, knew that the Russians would never agree.

Subsequently I was able to give Eden a copy of a remarkable document I had received from within fighting Poland. In view of the fact that some of its authors later were arrested as "reactionaries," it remains a living symbol of a hard-pressed underground's determination to create after victory a truly free, democratic, and progressive country.

The document⁹ set forth the terms under which the four main political parties of the Home Representation—the Peasant Party, the Socialist Party, the National Party, and the Christian Labor Party—proposed to cooperate throughout the transition period until a new republic should arise. During the transition the Home Representation Parties proposed to keep the government free from elements responsible for the Pilsudski-Beck excesses and promised to take interim steps aiming at the extension of individual freedom, the reform of agrarian policy, the promotion of cooperatives, and the repatriation of the thousands of Polish citizens who had been harried from their homes by Nazi and Soviet barbarians.

A few weeks after I became Prime Minister, I was informed by A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., United States Ambassador to the Polish government, that President Roosevelt would be happy to receive me in Washington the following January after the American Congress had reconvened.

I accepted immediately with thanks.

The machinery for the first meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin was already grinding out preliminaries. To pave the way for the historic session, which was destined to have such tragic consequences for Poland, the foreign

ministers of the major Powers convened. Secretary of State Cordell Hull suggested Casablanca as the site of this preliminary conference, but Moscow insisted that Hull and Eden come to the Soviet capital instead. They went.

I saw Eden shortly before he left, and for the first time (to my surprise) he brought up the question of Poland's postwar eastern frontier. There was scant possibility that Russia would renew relations with the Polish government, Eden said, unless we agreed to give the Reds that huge portion of Poland which the Red Army had invaded in 1939 as an ally of Hitler.

I was familiar, of course, with the guarded, semiofficial demands that had been coming out of Moscow for the previous year concerning the territory of postwar Poland. At the same time I was flabbergasted to hear Eden echoing those thoughts as if they were routine, not contemptible.

I reminded him of Prime Minister Churchill's memorable speech in the House of Commons, on August 5, 1940, in which he pledged that Great Britain would not recognize any territorial gains taken by force, and of his own formal note of July 30, 1941, repeating that pledge. I spoke, too, of the lofty sentiments expressed in the Atlantic Charter, of President Roosevelt's several assertions in this respect, and I warned him:

"If we give up this territory, which, actually, we are not empowered to yield, it will be only the beginning of Russian demands."

He asked my permission to empower him to discuss the frontier question in Moscow. I refused, and before his departure I handed him a memorandum explaining our position.

Immediately after his return from Moscow I saw Eden and asked him for a report on the outcome of the Polish aspect of his talks at the Kremlin.

"Molotov told me, 'I want to see a strong, independent Poland, but I cannot collaborate with the Polish government because it has no good will,'" Eden quoted. And then on his own he added, "And since you had bound my hands by refusing to discuss frontiers, I could do nothing more."

When I received the news that the long-awaited meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin would take place in the near future, I asked permission to see Churchill. The Big Three conference was of tremendous interest to us, especially in view of what had happened at the meeting of the foreign ministers. In London we felt that perhaps now the trying problem of the Polish-Soviet schism could be solved in the course of promised personal appeals to Stalin by both Churchill and Roosevelt. Both leaders felt certain at that time that they

would be able to make Stalin do what they wished by the sheer weight of their personalities, individual or combined.

I also asked to see Roosevelt in advance of our scheduled January meeting, for I was perhaps understandably eager to refresh his memory on our case, since he had indicated his desire to champion it. I offered to meet either Churchill or Roosevelt at any stopping place en route to Teheran, if I could not see them before they departed.

I received no immediate answer, and fearful that they might meet Stalin before I could give them the complete Polish position—which now incorporated certain alternatives for the solution of the existing difficulties—I dispatched a memorandum to each. The note to Churchill, delivered by Ambassador Raczynski in November, 1943,¹⁰ reviewed our reasons for opposing the cession to Russia of the eastern half of our country. The eastern lands, I reminded Churchill, contained many important centers of Polish tradition and life and were needed to solve the economic problems caused by the overpopulation of the Polish west. I urged upon Churchill the pressing need to restore Polish-Russian relations before the Soviet armies poured across the border in pursuit of the Nazis.

With my note to Churchill I enclosed the full text of our instructions to the Polish underground in order to familiarize the Prime Minister with the scope of our operations inside Poland and our complete willingness to aid the progress of the advancing Red Army.

On November 22 Eden saw me, and after explaining the contents of my memorandum, I again appealed to him to arrange for me a meeting with the British Prime Minister. It was not possible, Eden said. On the twenty-seventh I saw United States Ambassador Biddle, who informed me that Roosevelt had received my memorandum but that he had already left the United States after a careful study of what I had outlined. Biddle added that the President had expressed confidence that he could bring about a restoration of Polish-Soviet relations. The President, Biddle said, was still looking forward to seeing me in Washington immediately after his return to the United States.

Still hopeful of intercepting Churchill and Roosevelt before they met Stalin, I wired them at their Cairo meeting with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek late in November, 1943. Eden, replying for Churchill, said the meeting with Stalin was still uncertain as to both time and place, as was the very participation of Stalin in the talks. He suggested that any meeting among Churchill, Roosevelt,

and myself at this time—however discreet—might prompt Stalin to back out. The Big Three sessions, when and if achieved, Eden added, would be confined to military discussions, and he doubted if there would be time enough to go into any other matters.

Roosevelt replied, through R. E. Schoenfeld, American *chargé d'affaires*, that he still looked forward to seeing me in Washington in January, 1944. He asked me to rest assured that he had made an extensive study of the Polish situation and was fully prepared to present our case at the meeting with Stalin.

In London we restlessly awaited the outcome of a meeting that was to mean so much to our country. The official announcement, when it came on December 6, 1943, was astoundingly vague and brief. It took up the military question of pressing the war to a conclusion, but there was no mention of what decisions had been taken concerning Poland, if any.

It seemed appropriate for me to declare ¹¹ on that day of the announcement that the principles of the Atlantic Charter were sacred to Polish hearts. And I made a special point of Polish joy in the guarantees made at Cairo and Teheran to China and Iran.

My reason for this, of course, was to express obliquely and in the very words of the Big Three our own fears that "tyranny, slavery, intolerance, and oppression" would remain in Poland after the war if Teheran's promises were broken. I purposely mentioned Iran in an effort to draw a subtle parallel between its case and the more pressing case of Poland, which was suffering considerably more pain and yet had been given no such sweeping guarantee. I mentioned China because I saw in the Big Three's categorical pledge to restore that country's lost territories a chance to regain our own.

In this and other ways, including a speech on December 9 ¹² of that year at a meeting of the Anglo-Polish Parliamentary group of the House of Commons, I attempted to substantiate Poland's cause in the rosy language of Teheran.

One can perhaps understand the eagerness with which I awaited in London the return of Churchill from Teheran. But the Prime Minister was taken ill immediately after the Big Three conference, and my first information as to what had taken place at Teheran concerning Poland specifically came from Eden. I saw him upon his return, immediately after he had given our Ambassador, Edward Raczynski, a brief and shocking account of what had occurred when the Big Three discussed our country.

Eden reported that Stalin had expressed anger at the "insufficient coopera-

tion" of the Polish underground with the Red Army and was extremely critical of the Polish government.

"The air was filled with suspicion and recrimination," he said. I asked for suggestions.

"In the first place, I believe it would be wise on your part to prepare a memorandum incorporating your previous efforts to coordinate the underground activities with those of the Russians. Our own relations with the Soviet Union were considerably enhanced during the meeting at Teheran. We will send such a memorandum to Moscow, and perhaps it will clarify matters."

I outlined for him our repeated efforts to collaborate with the Russians, including an agreement reached by General Zhukov and General Sikorski—an agreement that produced absolutely no cooperation on the part of the Reds. I reminded him, too, that we had submitted to the British government a complete account of our present and future plans to aid the expected entry of the Red Army into Poland in its vast counteroffensive against the Germans. I spoke of our genuine fears of Russia's aims toward Poland.

"I share the Prime Minister's view that Stalin will not try to annihilate Poland or incorporate it into the Soviet Union," Eden said. "But it is obvious that Stalin's demands center around the establishment of the Curzon line as the future boundary between his country and Poland. Naturally, we agreed to nothing in this respect. We were not empowered to do so either by the British government or by your own."

I replied that no one was empowered arbitrarily to seize or yield half an Allied country.

"Stalin is ready to make compensation to you in East Prussia and Opole Silesia and establish the western frontier of Poland on the Oder line. The Prime Minister believes that if you would agree to this, there would be a good chance of an agreement with Russia, one that would make Poland independent and stronger than before the war."

My reply was that I could see no possibility of settling frontier questions now and that I was going forward with my plans to visit Roosevelt.

Eden shook his head. It was imperative, he said, that I first speak with Churchill when the Prime Minister returned from North Africa. With that thought in mind, he was prepared to ask the White House to postpone my scheduled meeting until later.

With misgivings we went on with the report on Teheran, and Eden reiter-

ated his request that the Polish government prepare a memorandum asserting that it would fight the Germans.

"That would be an affront to the brave men and women of Poland who have been fighting the Germans without a letup since 1939," I said.

Eden replied: "Stalin said at Teheran that he would renew relations with any Polish government that would declare itself ready to collaborate with the advancing Red Army, fight the Germans, and outline its plans for the impending campaign on the Polish soil."

"But let me remind you that I delivered our collaboration plans to you and the chiefs of staff a long time ago," I protested. "My government has complied in all respects and continues to do so. It seems so superfluous to promise to do something we're already doing."

The meeting broke off at that point, but as I left I could not resist expressing my disappointment over the outcome of the Teheran talks, especially in view of the confidence expressed in advance that Poland's position would be dealt with constructively.

"Even Iran got a guarantee from the Big Three," I said to Eden. "But Poland, despite her enormous sacrifices in this war, got none."

A few days later I received a message from Roosevelt, stating that Churchill had wired him, asking that as a "personal favor" my proposed meeting at the White House be postponed. "I agreed," Roosevelt concluded.

On January 1, 1944, I was informed by the Polish underground that Communist leaflets had been distributed throughout the country declaring that a National Council had been established in Warsaw and that its first decree was the appointment of a military commander for the AL (People's Army). Leaflets also announced that a "new Polish government" would be formed.

This information had been expected. Boleslaw Bierut, a savage Communist agent, had but recently been sent back to Warsaw by the Comintern.

The seamy career of the man who was destined to become "liberated" Poland's first president began in Lublin the day he met the old Polish Anarchist Hempel. Bierut was at the time a young clerk in a cooperative. Hempel was the black sheep of a prominent Polish family. He had struck out on his own, after embracing anarchism, and thereafter traveled extensively. He lived in India, where he studied Buddhism, and later moved to South America. In Brazil he entered into a controversy with the Catholic Church and returned angrily to Europe during World War I. He was arrested by the Austrians in

Cracow for illegal entry and imprisoned. In prison he became a Communist.

Bierut studied communism at Hempel's feet in Lublin after World War I, and soon found himself arrested. The Polish government jailed the young cooperative clerk for conspiracy against the nation. In obedience to the Party Line of that era, Bierut did not recognize the Polish government or, indeed, the nation itself. Along with the other little group of Communists in the country, he preached revolution, the overthrow of the government by force, and the inclusion of Poland in the USSR.

Bierut won his release from prison in an exchange between the Polish and Soviet governments in the early 1920's. He was exchanged for a priest. Shortly thereafter he sent for Hempel. After two years, however, both were arrested by the Russians and sent to a labor camp in Siberia, where Hempel died in Bierut's arms. Many other Polish Communists met similar fates in Russia. Bierut was released in the late 1930's and sent as a confirmed Red agent to work in Prague, Vienna, and Berlin.

A few years before the outbreak of World War II Bierut was ordered back to Poland. He entered the country secretly and took up the broken threads of his efforts against what had been his homeland. He was rearrested. But when the war erupted, he was released, along with other such prisoners. He returned to Russia and remained there until the end of 1943, when he was spirited back to Nazi-occupied Warsaw.

And thus, on the first day of 1944, he was able to announce by leaflet the true reason for his return: the establishment of a Communist government in a country scheduled soon to shake under Russian boots. That the Communists had played no role in the underground fight up to this time meant, of course, nothing to him or his masters. That he himself and those around him were completely unknown to the Poles they would one day rule also meant nothing.

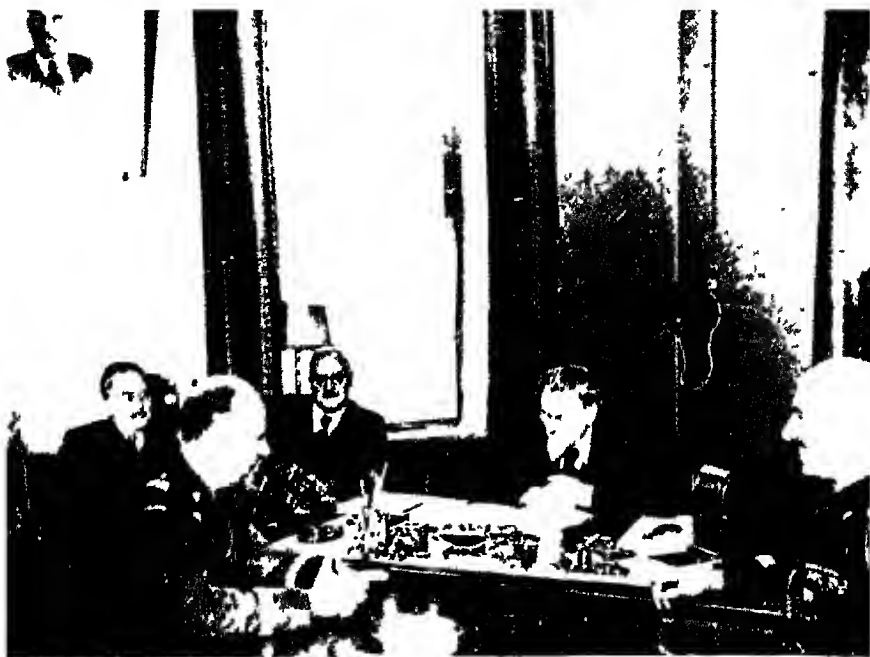
This was Moscow's political prelude to the crossing of the Red Army into Polish territory on January 4th. I went immediately to the radio and made a broadcast¹² reminding all Poles of their rights and fighting duties.

The broadcast gave detailed instructions about avoiding conflicts with the Russians, about carrying on the fight against the Nazis, and about the organization of affairs in Polish territory in the absence of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations.

At the same time the Polish government issued a declaration to the United Nations covering most of the points raised in my broadcast. The Russians re-



April 1, 1941: The Polish government tried to enlist the aid of the United States. After our visit to the White House, Prime Minister Sikorski (left) and I (right) called our visit "encouraging" (page 10).



International News Photo

December, 1941 Polish Prime Minister Sikorski takes up matter of 15,000 Polish prisoners of war who have disappeared in Russia. After a fruitless interview with Stalin, Polish Ambassador Kot (far left) sat down in Moscow with (left to right) General Sikorski, Vishinsky, Kalinin, and General Anders, Commander of the Polish Army in Russia (page 27).



International News Photo

July, 1943: After death of General Sikorski, I (standing) became Prime Minister of the Polish government. I pledged my word to my cabinet in London—and to Poles everywhere—that I would try to reestablish friendly relations with Russia (page 28).

sponded on January 11, 1944,¹⁴ and their reply confirmed the worst of what theretofore had been largely unofficial demands.

We, the stigmatized *émigré* government, replied that we would ask the United States and Great Britain to serve as intermediaries through which we could discuss the entire question of our borders with the Soviet Union. But TASS, speaking officially, brushed us off on January 17, 1944. We were accused of not wanting friendly relations with the Soviet, and bones of Katyń were rattled once more by hypocritical Russians.

Churchill returned to London not long after the beginning of 1944, and I saw him on January 20 in his office. He came briskly to the point.

"The British government takes the view that Poland must be strong, independent, and free," he began, and then quickly added, "from the Curzon line to the Oder."

Before I could retort he continued expansively, "Poles east of the Curzon line will have the right to be repatriated from Russian-held land into Poland proper, and Ukrainians and White Russians in Poland proper will have a similar right to return to the east of the Curzon line.

"In the west the Germans, about seven million of them living in that area between the old German-Polish border and the Oder, will be transported into Germany proper."

When I raised the first of my objections about this obvious unilateral partition of Poland, Churchill reminded me a bit tartly that the Anglo-Polish alliance pact, signed just before the outbreak of the war, had obliged Britain to defend Poland and Poland's independence against the Germans but had not mentioned the eastern frontiers of Poland.

"You must understand this, Mr. Mikołajczyk, Great Britain and the United States will not go to war to defend the eastern frontiers of Poland.

"If an agreement is reached now about those frontiers, this agreement could be guaranteed by Great Britain as well as the Soviet Union. It is not possible under the American Constitution for President Roosevelt to guarantee the borders of any foreign country.

"Therefore, I urge you to agree to the Curzon line as the eastern frontier of Poland, in principle at least. If you agree only in principle, that would be a starting point for negotiations which, I'm sure, would lead to the restoration of Polish-Soviet relations.

"You know, Stalin is also demanding changes in the Polish government and

wants your Commander in Chief, General Sosnkowski, replaced. But I cannot entertain his authority to interfere in Polish internal questions. However, I believe that if you would announce your recognition, in principle, of the Curzon line, Stalin's other objections could be overridden, and agreement also could be reached as to collaboration between the Polish underground and the advancing Red Army. Are you ready to make such an announcement? Remember, the situation is grave. If you do not act quickly, I cannot be responsible for anything that might take place."

"I cannot make such an announcement, Mr. Prime Minister," I answered. "Poland cannot emerge from this war diminished. You are asking for an intolerable concession. There are many things I could say now. I hardly know where to begin. If we were to yield the eastern half of our country we would be yielding Lwów and Vilna, and we cannot give up those cities.

"I suppose we must now take into account Britain's refusal to defend our position in the east. But let me tell you that this will be a test case. It will compromise an Allied nation grossly and unjustly, and it will not bring peace to Europe.

"Don't you see, Mr. Prime Minister," I pleaded, "that the Soviet Union's aim is not only to take the eastern half of our country but to take all of Poland—all of Europe? We have tried so diligently to keep the unity of the Allies, to cooperate. But do you realize that since the Red Army entered Poland it has been disarming and arresting the very members of the Polish underground who helped the Russians capture each point?"

Churchill shrugged. "That's more of a reason why you should now agree quickly to the Curzon line."

I saw there was no use in attempting to present the case that he had once hailed with true Churchillian ardor. "I'll take this matter up with my government and the underground and give you the answer as quickly as I learn it," I said and left.

I presented the new demands to the underground. While awaiting its reply, I presented a note ¹⁵ to the British, giving expression to our fears of the Red Army's conduct as it reentered Poland; I asked for inter-Allied support in our difficult situation. A Moscow order to Soviet partisans on Polish territory had commanded them to liquidate Home Army units and shoot our leaders. We were naturally extremely apprehensive about this and wished England and America to look into it. A second note ¹⁶ to the British Foreign Office sought

vital information as to the future of Poland, in view of the demands Churchill had made. Eden replied that most of the questions raised in the second note about guarantees concerned problems whose solution would not lie in the hands of His Majesty's Government alone but would be a matter for settlement between his country and the other Powers concerned, including, of course, Poland. "Until His Majesty's Government have elicited the views of the other Governments concerned, and have more definite information regarding the basis upon which agreement might be reached between the Polish and Soviet Governments, they are not in a position to return any final answer to the detailed questions contained in your letter."

I had sent somewhat similar questions to President Roosevelt. On February 1, 1944, he offered sympathy and the good offices of the United States, but that was about all.¹⁷ Our final reply to Churchill on February 15, 1944, was both candid and abrupt. In this ¹⁸ we rejected the "dictatorial demand" of the USSR that we agree in advance to the Curzon line as our eastern border. We also objected to the projected Russian seizure of Königsberg and the East Prussian coast. Tentatively we consented to a temporary *demarcation line* running east of Vilna and Lwów. But this was for the period of war hostilities only.

The tone of our note infuriated Churchill. "You know there will be no restoration of Polish-Soviet relations unless you consent to Russia's territorial demands," he stormed.

"I am not empowered to give away half my country," I protested, just as hotly.

Churchill turned away unhappily. "I'll have a public statement on this matter in the near future," he said. In the meantime, however, the British Prime Minister submitted our conciliatory demarcation-line plans to Stalin. Ambassador Harriman offered the services of the United States to Russia in the hope of restoring Soviet-Polish relations. The offer was abruptly rejected by Stalin.

On February 22, 1944, before he received a reply from Moscow, Churchill spoke in the House of Commons on the Polish question and revealed officially some of the unspoken aspects of Teheran. His speech had met first with full approval of the British Cabinet:

I took occasion to raise personally with Marshal Stalin the question of the future of Poland. . . . It was with great pleasure that I heard from Marshal Stalin that he, too, was resolved upon the creation and maintenance of a strong, integral, independent Poland as one of the leading Powers in Europe. He has several times

repeated these declarations in public, and I am convinced that they represent the settled policy of the Soviet Union.

I may remind the House that we ourselves have never in the past guaranteed, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, any particular frontier line to Poland. We did not approve of the Polish occupation of Vilna in 1920. The British view in 1919 stands expressed in the so-called 'Curzon Line,' which attempted to deal, at any rate partially, with the problem. I have always held the opinion that all questions of territorial settlement and readjustment should stand over until the end of the war, and that the victorious Powers should then arrive at formal and final agreement governing the articulation of Europe as a whole. That is still the wish of His Majesty's Government.

However, the advance of the Russian armies into Polish regions in which the Polish underground army is active makes it indispensable that some kind of friendly working agreement should be arrived at to govern the war-time conditions and enable all anti-Hitlerite forces to work together with the greatest advantage against the common foe. During the last few weeks the Foreign Secretary and I have labored with the Polish Government in London with the object of establishing a working arrangement upon which the fighting forces can act, and upon which, I trust, an increasing structure of good will and comradeship may be built between Russia and Poland.

I have an intense sympathy with the Poles, that heroic race whose national spirit centuries of misfortune cannot quench, but I also have sympathy with the Russian standpoint. Twice in our lifetime Russia has been violently assaulted by Germany. Many millions of Russians have been slain and vast tracts of Russian soil devastated as a result of repeated German aggression. Russia has the right to reassurance against future attacks from the West, and we are going all the way with her to see that she gets it, not only by the might of her arms but by the approval and assent of the United Nations.

The liberation of Poland may presently be achieved by the Russian armies, after these armies have suffered millions of casualties in breaking the German military machine. I cannot feel that the Russian demand for reassurance about her western frontiers goes beyond the limits of what is reasonable or just. Marshal Stalin and I also agreed upon the need for Poland to obtain compensation at the expense of Germany both in the north and in the west.

Polish protests from within the country and from our armed forces everywhere were immediate and inflammatory. With some misgivings, I had to urge patience upon these outraged people. An order of the day to the armed forces urged self-discipline.

On February 24 Foreign Minister Romer protested officially to the Foreign Office. He reminded Eden that Poland's eastern frontiers had been approved

by the Council of Ambassadors in 1923 and that Lord Curzon had taken a prominent role in that approval. The United States had lent wholehearted endorsement to the frontiers, he added.

Our position was, of course, taken advantage of by the alert German propaganda forces. The Nazis established a Polish radio program, beamed from Rome to Polish soldiers who were bearing the brunt of the costly attack at Cassino. The program urged them to stop fighting. "Your land has been delivered into Stalin's hands by Churchill," the announcers reiterated. "You have no place to which to return when the war is done." Inside Poland, Governor General Frank broadcast from Katowice to Polish citizens, "Stop your senseless resistance! You've been sold out to Moscow."

Stalin stripped away all pretense from his plans in a public statement in March. He directly demanded the establishment of the Curzon line as the frontier, demanded the removal of Polish cabinet ministers "unfriendly to Soviet Russia," and their replacement by Poles in Great Britain and the United States. He singled out General Kukiel for special scorn. Stalin had not forgotten Katyń.

I came to the General's defense as strongly as possible. I told the British that the attack was grossly unfair.

"Recently, when five British officers were sentenced to death by the Germans, your government asked the Red Cross to intervene," I reminded the British Ambassador to the Polish government. "And when Mr. Eden announced in Parliament that the Japanese were murdering both British and United States officers and men, even a member of Parliament demanded that the case be turned over to the Red Cross. Mr. Shinwell proposed that Russia be asked to approach the Japanese government and ask that such murders be stopped. Tell me then why General Kukiel is assailed now by Stalin for having used the same methods?"

Reports from inside Poland now proved beyond all question of doubt that the fears we had earlier expressed about the actions of the Red Army advancing across Poland had been realized. The British had for some time had in their possession our complete instructions to our underground, ordering an increased fight against the Germans and full cooperation with the Red Army. They knew full details, including the code word "Tempest"—the command now being given by individual leaders to their Home Army units to rise and help the Red Army liberate each area.

The Russians were accepting this aid and then turning on those who helped them. They were killing our underground officers and seizing our arms. Therefore, on March 4 I asked in a note to Eden that Britain exert its influence with the Soviet government to prevent these repressions, "and afford protection to persons particularly exposed, owing to the execution of the duties allotted to them."

My visit to the White House, already postponed once, was again postponed at this time, and indefinitely. Mr. Schoenfeld handed me a letter from President Roosevelt stating that he wanted to see me very much, "but a visit at this time may bring misunderstanding in public opinion." He added that my presence at the White House might weaken rather than strengthen Poland's case.

I had expected this but expressed my regret. My fear was that the Big Three would meet again in the near future and that I would again have no opportunity to be present when they took decisions concerning Poland. So I asked our Ambassador Ciechanowski to report to London from Washington for talks, and on March 18 he returned to the United States with a letter for Roosevelt,¹⁹ suggesting that my visit to Washington would do much to assure the Polish people that both the United States and Britain stood behind us. I also urged Roosevelt to realize that disaster would come from portraying the Russians as "democrats," for only cynicism and disillusion could result from it in the long run. As for the Soviet intentions toward Poland, I warned the President that the great masses of Polish farmers would never accept totalitarian collectivism in any form. I protested against the slanderous propaganda inspired by the Soviets calling the Polish government "undemocratic," and said no one could blame us for refusing to hand over half our national territory to the USSR. Other points covered in my letter included the need for more arms and supplies for the Polish underground army. I concluded with an assurance that Poles had faith in Roosevelt and the United States and that the Polish underground army would come out into the open and offer its collaboration against the Nazis to the Soviet forces when they entered Poland, "even if diplomatic relations between the Polish and Russian governments are not resumed."

Seven enclosures accompanied my letter to Roosevelt. Among them²⁰ were messages of confidence between the Polish government and its underground deputies; the acceptance of the proposed western boundaries by the under-

ground but its determination to have this matter fixed before any territory was yielded in the east; underground difficulties with Polish Communist forces that had appeared only after the underground had waged years of war against the Germans; a message from Socialist members of the underground to Clement Attlee, then head of the British Labor Party; and the expressed determination of the underground to continue the fight for freedom.

Roosevelt's answer to my plea, written on April 3, 1944,²¹ explained that he was suffering from bronchitis and would be forced to leave Washington for a few weeks' rest. The tentative date for my Washington trip was thus postponed until the first part of May at the very earliest.

The Germans learned of the various delays. Their propaganda mills began predicting that I would never be given the opportunity to visit the White House. But late in May Roosevelt informed me that he would see me on, or about, June 6.

In the meantime I talked with Churchill, Ambassador Winant, and Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., then Lend-Lease director, at Chequers on April 9. Churchill was in a jovial mood. As he introduced me to the Americans, he chuckled:

"Now you're meeting better friends of Poland than I am." Dropping his lightness, he went on:

"I still believe in the Curzon line, but I will not rest until I see a free and independent Poland. Two weeks ago I stopped my exchange of telegrams with Stalin concerning Poland. I found that the exchange was useless. Stalin's last message was very rude.

"I think you ought to go to the United States now and tell the American people the full story of Poland's case. It would give you an opportunity to deny the Soviet propaganda about 'landlords' and 'reactionaries' in the Polish government."

The Americans spoke of the Polish-Americans and called them fine citizens "but very intense about the present situation," Winant added.

I was able to tell them that night about the exploits of a large unit of the Home Army that had showed itself in Volhynia and had won such admiration from the Red Army of that region that a local agreement had been signed between the two forces. Churchill and the Americans were happy to hear this for it appeared to be a ray of hope for better relations. But the collaboration was to be purely temporary. The Reds cooperated with the Volhynia forces

only until such a time as the Red Army was strengthened in that area. Then came the arrests.

Churchill bade me good night with a strong assurance. "Don't worry," he said. "Poland will emerge from this war strong and independent."

"Much will depend on your attitude, Mr. Prime Minister," I pointed out.

He held up his hands in mock horror. "I've got enough to do, being responsible to Britain," he said.

"But," I remarked, "you also have a responsibility toward all nations that have placed their confidence in you."

A few weeks later a well-organized special unit of the underground was able to spirit two important figures out of Poland and deliver them to London. One was our Deputy Chief of Staff in Warsaw, who went under the name of General Tabor. The other was a member of the underground parliament, Berezowski. I introduced them to Churchill, and he listened raptly to their reports of the military and political situation inside our oppressed nation.

D-Day was rapidly approaching. On June 3, 1944, at the request of General Eisenhower's headquarters, I recorded a speech to be broadcast as the Allied armies hit the French beaches. It was a call to the Polish underground of France to rise in fury with the *maquis* and help the liberating forces. It was an appeal, also, to Poles who had been forcibly taken into the German Army to desert and cross over to the Allied side.

Then I flew to the United States with General Tabor, arriving in Washington on June 6. My first appointment was with Undersecretary Stettinius. I gave him a full report on conditions inside Poland, and Tabor presented the plans and needs of the Home Army. I stressed the difficulties of our increasing isolation from the other Allies and the Polish-Soviet problem. I spoke of postwar plans for the reconstruction of Poland and the hopes of aid from the United States in those plans. I mentioned also the tone of OWI broadcasts to Poland. They had been following the Communist line consistently, which made our own job more difficult.

"It's unwise to adopt this approach to the Polish people," I told the Undersecretary. "If you continue to call Russia a 'democracy,' you may eventually regret that statement, and your people will condemn you.

"Your government once called Poland 'the inspiration of the nations,' but now the OWI calls the Communist forces just that. Please don't think we

haven't tried to make friends with Russia, for we have. Poland just does not want to become another Red satellite."

Stettinius took a lot of notes for the President, and when I saw Roosevelt the following day, I found him well prepared. He seemed strikingly older and more depleted than when I had met him with General Sikorski in 1941. I later learned that Roosevelt had only a few months before agreed to turn over to Stalin the huge section of Poland that the Red Army had invaded while an Axis partner. But at this time his manner was one of great courtesy.

"Poland must be free and independent," he said.

"What about Stalin?" I asked.

"Stalin is a realist," Roosevelt replied, lighting a cigarette. "And we mustn't forget, when we judge Russian actions, that the Soviet regime has had only two years of experience in international relations. But of one thing I am certain," he added, "Stalin is not an imperialist."

I thought to myself, "Here is the perfect idealist, but his faith in Stalin is tragically misplaced."

Roosevelt continued in a cheerful manner. He said that personally he and Stalin had gotten along famously at their Teheran meeting; better, he added with a laugh, than had Stalin and Churchill. I asked him what had been decided about the future Polish frontiers at Teheran.

"Stalin wasn't eager to talk about it," he went on. "I want you to know that I am still opposed to dividing Poland with this line and that eventually I will act as a moderator in this problem and effect a settlement."

Roosevelt then explained to me what a "moderator" was and used as an example the mediation by a neutral authority of certain United States labor disputes.

"I understand, Mr. President," I said. "But in the case of domestic problems you are dealing with your own citizens. You can settle matters by a bill or decree. But this would hardly apply to the current Polish problem."

Roosevelt paused before he went on.

"I haven't acted on the Polish question because this is an election year," he said. "You as a democrat understand such things." He laughed suddenly. "You know, I mentioned the matter of our forthcoming American elections to Stalin, and he just couldn't comprehend what I was talking about. I guess he'll never become accustomed to understanding that there is a device known

as free elections—by which political matters within one's country, as well as officeholders, may be changed."

That aspect of Stalin's outlook on mankind was my worry too, I told the President. He was more thoughtful when he answered.

"In all our dealings with Stalin we must keep our fingers crossed," he said. Then his mood changed again. "And you Poles must find an understanding with Russia. On your own, you'd have no chance to beat Russia, and let me tell you now, the British and Americans have no intention of fighting Russia.

"But don't worry," he added. "Stalin doesn't intend to take freedom from Poland. He wouldn't dare do that because he knows that the United States government stands solidly behind you. I will see to it that Poland does not come out of this war injured."

"But there is every indication at present that we will," I protested.

"I'm sure I'll be able to manage an agreement in which Poland will get Silesia, East Prussia, Königsberg, Lwów, the region of Tarnopol and the oil and potash area of Drohobycz," he said, showing a surprising knowledge of our country. "But I don't believe I can secure the city of Vilna for you."

This represented a change from his earlier statement that he opposed partition of Poland, and I said that Russia had no more right to half our country than it had to that portion of the United States from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and that more than four million Poles had by this time been killed in the actual or spiritual defense of land he was tacitly partitioning.

Then he turned the talk quickly to other matters geographical, including an account of his bicycle trips through Europe as a young man, after which he returned to the topic at hand.

"Stalin doesn't want to annihilate Poland," he said. "Stalin knows that Poland has a strong position in the Allied camp, especially with the United States. I will see to it that Poland will not be hurt in this war and will emerge strongly independent."

The mention of Stalin reminded him of a story.

"You know," he mused, "Soviet Russia is changing. Even its attitude toward the Church is changing. When Litvinov was Ambassador here, I asked him to permit us to have a priest stationed at the American Embassy in Moscow—you know, to look out for the spiritual needs of the Catholic members of our staff there. My request was rejected, so the next time I saw Litvinov I told him I was very surprised. I said to him, 'When you were a young man, you

studied to be a rabbi. You certainly must know that people like to have a religious man around in case of need. Every man's life reaches that point when he starts to think of God. So why was my request not granted? After all, you permitted a Coptic priest to live with the Abyssinian delegation to your country.'

"Litvinov sat bolt upright in his chair when I mentioned that, and he demanded, 'Where did you find out about such an agreement?'"

"I told him that a little bird had delivered the agreement to me. We got our priest. Then, later, in Teheran, I told this story to Stalin, and I reminded Stalin that he had studied to be a priest and that he, especially, should have appreciated our request for the presence of a priest on our Embassy staff instantly. I told him, too, that he should change his unfriendly attitude toward the Church. But all Stalin did was shrug and say, 'I'm too old to be converted.'"

Roosevelt then asked me where I thought the Russian offensive would proceed. I must have shown my surprise.

"You certainly must know," I said. "Wasn't all this agreed to at Teheran?"

"Only on a broad basis," he answered. "They didn't go into particulars."

Before our session ended, I reported to the President that my government had just recognized the French Committee of National Liberation and outlined the joint action of our own underground forces with those of the *maquis*. I added that I was happy to hear that General de Gaulle would soon be invited to the White House.

In the end Roosevelt asked me to see Stalin. I agreed instantly, and he dispatched a message to the Marshal asking him to receive me. It was a flattering message, couched in informal terms. Before I left the White House for the last time, Roosevelt promised to help the Polish underground, indicated a willingness to aid in the enormous task of rehabilitating postwar Poland—he mentioned loans for a highway program and the extension of rural electrification—and assured me that the OWI broadcasts about which I had complained would be changed.

Before I left Washington, I was entertained at the White House. I had been told there would be no speeches, but at the end of the dinner Roosevelt spoke informally, and I felt obliged to answer.

I said that my dream for the future Poland was to see it become a country whose people possessed that most priceless gift which had come to the American people by their own hard work and sincerity—freedom.

"As human beings we are essentially the same as Americans," I went on. "We could be happy, however, with only a tiny portion of your physical possessions. We could endure a much lower standard of living—if we could secure the freedom for which we fight. I do not mean to limit this to Poland," I finished. "It is my hope that the United States' concept of freedom some day will rule all European peoples."

Eden had asked me to see Oskar Lange when I got to Washington. Lange was born in Poland, lived for years in the United States, and finally became an American citizen. Subsequently, he taught as a professor at the University of Chicago. (Later he renounced his United States citizenship and over my opposition became the first Ambassador to the United States of the Provisional Polish Government.) He had just come back to Washington from a conference with Stalin in Moscow. Upon his return he sent a long memorandum to Churchill and, though a private citizen, to the State Department. I could not promise Eden that I would see him as he then held no official position, and I doubted whether anything would come of such a session. But I learned in Washington that he had sent a protest to the State Department, claiming that the Polish Embassy had pigeonholed his request for an audience with me. This was not true, and I did see Lange after I had concluded my talks with the President.

"Stalin would like to renew relations with the Polish government," Lange told me. "He understands the reluctance of the government to yield to his present demands about the Curzon line. But he believes the Polish government will be more than willing to talk terms after the Red Army delivers the eastern part of Germany, and he can make positive assurances that the Poles will be compensated with some of this territory. He's eager to talk to you about this. He asked me to see you and tell you so."

I let the man go on.

"I saw a lot of the Polish people in Russia," Lange continued. "I found them very patriotic and anti-Communist. They uniformly oppose Russia's claims to Lwów and Vilna. So I warned Stalin that his present attitude was turning the Polish people against Russia.

"But I must take into consideration the feelings of my Ukrainian people," Stalin said.

"I told Stalin that he must choose between the feelings of the Poles and the

Ukrainians and urged him to lean toward the Poles. Stalin answered, 'We'll discuss this question in another atmosphere.'

"Stalin added that he did not intend to intervene in internal Polish questions, but he noted that the Polish Communists were, in the main, less radical than other political parties—and he named elements of the Peasant Party and the Socialist Party. He added that he was very interested in the future foreign policy of Poland and said that his attitude toward the country will largely depend on just what shape that policy takes."

Lange turned his talk to Berling's forces and spoke of Poles forced into the Red Army after General Anders had left the USSR. He also talked about the Polish prisoners of war captured from the German Army and Poles conscripted into the Red Army as it advanced through Poland.

"Russian officers command Berling's forces," he reported. "They've been promised Polish citizenship after the war. But the Poles themselves fighting in this army remain anti-Communistic, and they are openly opposed to collectivism."

"There are many other problems," he sighed. "I talked with Dr. Sommerstein, the Zionist leader, and he expressed the fear that about four hundred thousand Polish Jews now in Russia will not be permitted to return to Poland. Dr. Sommerstein asked me to bring this to the attention of Stalin, but other topics appeared when I spoke to the Marshal, and I didn't have time."

"Stalin remains enthusiastic about Berling's men, however; he says their strength will grow to a million men and that he'll supply all of them with arms. 'They are the nucleus of the future Polish government,' he told me. Stalin added, I might say, that he's not sure Poland will get Wroclaw or not, when the lands in the west are distributed. Roosevelt thinks Poland should get this city, and Churchill remains undecided."

"I asked Stalin about the possibility of German revenge in that portion of their country turned over to Poland. But he scoffed at this. He said that the armed might of the Red Army will attend to such matters. He believes, too, that most of the Germans in the new territory must be expelled. He said, 'We'll find room for about three million of them in Siberia. Some of the others will be sent back into what is left of Germany, and we'll find places for the rest of them—perhaps in South America.'"

Lange left me and the next day called a press conference.

"I did most of the talking," he said, in answer to a question about his meeting with me. "Mikolajczyk just sat there with a poker face, obviously unwilling to give me his opinion."

Before I left Washington, I was offered fifteen minutes of radio time on a Washington station. I accepted, then learned that Lange had been given the next fifteen minutes as a sort of rebuttal. Hence, I refused to speak. I did talk, however, with the Senate and House Committees on Foreign Relations and Affairs. Before I left the capital, the President presented me with an affectionately inscribed photograph of himself, and Stettinius brought me a letter from Roosevelt ²² at the airport.

When Stalin's reply to Roosevelt's message on behalf of myself and Poland came, the President must have been surprised, considering the fact that he was sure of his role as moderator. For Stalin wired:

Thank you very much for informing me about your meeting with Mr. Mikolajczyk.

It is to bear in mind that the establishment of co-operation between the Red Army and the Polish Underground is undoubtedly now an essential matter. The solution of the problem of Polish-Soviet relations has a great bearing in this matter.

You are familiar with the point of view of the Soviet Government and its endeavor to see Poland strong, independent and democratic and the Polish-Soviet relations good-neighborly and based upon durable friendship.

The Soviet Government sees the most important promises of this in the reorganization of the *émigré* Polish Government which would provide the participation in it of Polish statesmen in England, as well as Polish statesmen in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., and especially Polish democratic statesmen in Poland itself and also in the recognition by the Polish Government of the Curzon Line as the new border between the U.S.S.R. and Poland.

It is necessary to say, however, that from the statement of Mr. Mikolajczyk in Washington it is not seen that he makes in this matter any step forward. That is why it is difficult for me, at the present moment, to offer any opinion about Mr. Mikolajczyk's trip to Moscow.

Stalin

I could not share the President's surprise. For I had had two conferences with Russian Ambassador Lebedev in London before Stalin sent his message to the White House. Lebedev had asked for another conference just before I left for Washington, but the request had come too late. I preferred to see Roosevelt first.

The Russian Ambassador was quite friendly when we met on June 20 at

Professor Stanislaw Grabski's London quarters. German V-1's were dropping on London that day, but through his wincing Lebedev told me that he had been ordered by his government to sound me out on Poland's future. He indicated that Stalin was now sympathetically disposed toward us. Then he asked me to outline for him our attitude.

I told him that we preferred to leave the question of Poland's frontiers to the peace conference. I assured him that the Polish Home Army was collaborating strongly with the Red Army, despite the deplorable ethics of the latter. I promised that the underground government would still be happy to join the Home Army and enter into any plan that would hasten the liberation of our country.

He left, saying that he was certain that our difficulties could now be solved. Three days later he returned with the Soviet proposals. The USSR, he said, was calling upon the London government to dismiss President Raczkiewicz, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, our Chief of Staff, General Marian Kukiel, and Kot, now our Minister of Information.

These men, Lebedev added, must be replaced by Poles "from Britain and the United States." In addition he demanded that the reconstructed Polish government denounce the Polish government that had brought the Katyń murders to the attention of the International Red Cross.

I laughed at him when he presented the last demand.

"You're asking me, who served as a minister in General Sikorski's government, to denounce that government?"

He nodded.

"Then we have no other business at this time," I concluded.

A few weeks later Churchill sent a much stronger note than Roosevelt's to Stalin, urging the Soviet chieftain to see me. And forthwith I received an invitation to visit the Kremlin during the first week in August, 1944.

As always, Stalin had a motive.

Chapter Six

BETRAYAL

Moscow provokes Warsaw to rise

General Bór asks for help

Stalin sits back

The Lublin Poles aid betrayal

Run-around in Moscow

Bór surrenders



As early as April, 1944, nearly four months before the enormous tragedy of the Warsaw uprising, certain portions of the Polish underground army had indicated to us in London that they would be hesitant to show themselves to the Red Army when it approached their cities.

These Polish units were, of course, completely familiar with the activities of the Red Army and its NKVD personnel in other sections of Poland liberated from German rule. In London we made known these fears in a statement (April 4, 1944) which read in part:

Messages from Poland confirm that the Soviet commanders receive assistance everywhere and that they praise the fighting spirit and the leadership of the Polish underground forces.

However, reports have been received from a number of localities that have caused anxiety and require elucidation. The Polish government has communicated the facts of such reports to the British and American governments and requested their assistance in the prevention of incidents that may hinder the further coming into

the open of the Polish underground army and render impossible concerted military operations against the Germans.

Instructions to come into the open and to cooperate with the Soviet Army in the fight against the Germans have not been revoked and still remain in force.

In the last paragraph we were referring, of course, to "Tempest." It was a word that inflamed the fighting heart of Poland, for its utterance—as the victorious Red Army approached each city or area where we maintained clandestine forces—meant that brave men and women could now emerge from their shelters and fight the overwhelmingly superior German forces with the knowledge that the Red Army was nearby and would lend its own great weight to the struggle.

But in the greatest of these efforts to collaborate with the advancing Russians, "Tempest" became a grim synonym for betrayal. The deliberately provoked uprising of the Warsaw underground army and its pitiless annihilation by the Germans while a considerable Red Army force looked on from the suburbs of the capital will forever hold its ugly place in the blackest of history's records.

The "Tempest" order was an elastic one. Its utterance was left to the judgment of individual commanders, as we knew in London that these men, being on the spot, were ably fitted to decide the hour and minute of each underground uprising—eruptive little waves that preceded the vast tidal wave of the Red Army as it rolled across Poland.

And so the hard, individual decision finally came to General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski in Warsaw where, in the face of the cruelest and most vigilant German efforts, we then maintained the underground division of our parliament; courts of justice that meted out positive punishment to German commanders for their hideous atrocities; schools; welfare services; clandestine newspapers; an extensive communications system; tiny but efficient munitions plants and over 40,000 well-trained, superbly loyal troops. To these troops must be added the whole courageous population of Warsaw, including patriotic youths such as Boy Scouts.

Bór-Komorowski, Deputy Prime Minister Jan Jankowski, and Kazimierz Pużak, speaker of the underground parliament, were fully aware of the arrests and murders of underground fighters elsewhere in Poland after those patriots had aided the Russians and revealed themselves with gestures of friendship.

Nevertheless, these underground leaders in Warsaw felt that their forces

within the capital could make a very determined stand against the Germans and render a military contribution that could not be ignored. Warsaw was the most important German communication and transport center.

Through the latter part of July, 1944, the Nazi reign of terror within Warsaw was stepped up, probably in an effort to crush all hope that the Poles within would be able to help the approaching Russians. There were waves of deportations, murders of prisoners, and mass executions. Poles who were needed for the uprising were beginning to be arrested in great numbers and put to work digging trenches and tank traps in preparation for the impending siege. Unluckily, a few days before the uprising the Germans discovered an underground cache of 40,000 grenades.

As the day of decision—and the arrival of the Red Army—approached, General Bór-Komorowski placed the strength of his military forces at 35,000 front-line fighters and 7,000 auxiliary troops. Of these, 20,000 were armed, mainly with rifles and light machine guns. The British had supplied about a third of these arms by parachute. Another third had been painfully turned out in small, underground arms plants. The remainder had been seized from the German occupation forces or were relics of the 1939 campaign. There was a critical need for antitank guns. Food and medical supplies capable of supplying the fighting forces for a week, without Russian aid, were hidden. Plans called for the unarmed half of the forces to seize German weapons and ammunition in the first hours of the rising.

On July 28, 1944, an official communiqué from Moscow announced that Marshal Rokossovsky's troops, "advancing on Warsaw from the south and east on a front nearly 50 miles wide," were at points within 40 miles of the capital.

The following day (meanwhile I was starting my flight to Moscow to see Stalin and attempting to effect a restoration of Polish-Soviet relations) the Russians formally announced:

In Central Poland, Marshal Rokossovsky's tanks, motorized infantry, and Cossack cavalry, powerfully supported by the Red Air Force, pressed on towards Warsaw and were heavily engaged about 20 miles S.E. with German lorry-borne reinforcements rushed to the front to stem the advance.

Praga, the industrial suburb of Warsaw on the east bank of the Vistula, came under Russian artillery fire.

Unknown to me, as I traveled from London to North Africa on the first leg of my journey to the Kremlin, the Warsaw underground on July 29, 1944, at 8:15 P.M., received this broadcast (also monitored by the BBC) in Polish from the Moscow radio station, which was called *Kościuszko*:

No doubt Warsaw already hears the guns of the battle that is soon to bring her liberation. Those who have never bowed their heads to the Hitlerite power will again, as in 1939, join battle with the Germans, this time for the decisive action.

The Polish Army now entering Polish territory, trained in the U.S.S.R., is now joined to the People's Army to form the corps of the Polish armed forces, the armed arm of our nation in its struggle for independence.

Its ranks will be joined tomorrow by the sons of Warsaw. They will all, together with the Allied army, pursue the enemy westward, wipe out the Hitlerite vermin from the Polish land, and strike a mortal blow at the beast of Prussian imperialism.

For Warsaw, which did not yield but fought on, the hour of action has already arrived. The Germans will no doubt try to defend themselves in Warsaw and add new destruction and more thousands of victims. Our houses and parks, our bridges and railway stations, our factories, and our public buildings will be turned into defense positions. They will expose the city to ruin and its inhabitants to death. They will try to take away all the most precious possessions and turn into dust all that they have to leave behind. It is, therefore, a hundred times more necessary than ever to remember that in the flood of Hitlerite destruction all is lost that is not saved by active effort and that by direct active struggle in the streets of Warsaw, in its houses, factories, and stores we not only hasten the moment of final liberation but also save the nation's property and the lives of our brethren.

Poles, the time of liberation is at hand! Poles, to arms! There is not a moment to lose!

The people of Warsaw arose. And on August 1, 1944, at 5 P.M., when the normally filled streets of the capital offered our men an opportunity to assemble without attracting attention, we struck—and were instantly opposed by five divisions of Germans commanded by General Stahl and S.S. *Obergruppenführer* von dem Bach. They called almost immediately for reinforcements and soon received the tremendous aid of the Hermann Goering Division, rushed up from Italy; the Totenkopf Division, from Rumania, and the S.S. Division Viking, withdrawn from the Lublin front.

General Bór-Komorowski sent three messages to London during that first of sixty-three nights and days of a flaming hell. He radioed:

On August 1, at 1700 hours, we started to fight for Warsaw. Send ammunition and antitank weapons urgently.

In connection with the lack of uniforms, we request you to cause the Supreme Allied Command to declare the Polish Home Army a party of the Allied Forces, as has been done in the case of the French Army of the Interior.

In view of the beginning of the fight for Warsaw, we request you to cause the Russians to help by attacking from outside.

As I flew across North Africa, en route to the brief stop at Cairo, accompanied by Professor Grabski, speaker of our parliament, and our Foreign Minister Romer, I knew nothing about these developments.

At Cairo and some hours later at Teheran I learned, instead, that Stalin had effectively spiked virtually all remaining hope of an accord between the Polish and Soviet governments by entering into an agreement with what was then known as the Polish Committee of National Liberation—the faceless, renegade Polish Communists and Russian citizens whom he had organized earlier as an instrument of his plans for postwar Poland.

There was no way of knowing, naturally, that before he made his pact with these servile persons, Stalin forced them secretly to sign two agreements: (1) that the future administration of Poland would be in the hands of the Red Army and that the Polish Home Army men would be surrendered to the Red generals, charged with being anti-Soviet, and deported to Russia; (2) that the new governmental group must recognize the Curzon line as the eastern frontier.

The Kremlin's public announcement of this fraud, achieved in cynical defiance of such pledges as the Atlantic Charter, Teheran, and other pacts and declarations confined itself, however, to this declaration:

The Soviet Government declares that it views the military operations conducted by the Red Army on the territory of Poland as operations on the territory of a sovereign, friendly Allied state.

In this connection the Soviet Government has no intention of establishing on the territory of Poland its own administrative organs, considering this a concern of the Polish people.

It has, therefore, decided to conclude with the Polish Committee of National Liberation an agreement regarding relations between the Soviet command and the Polish administration. The Soviet Government declares that it does not pursue the aim of acquiring any part of Polish territory or the alteration of the Polish social order.

When I learned the full scope of this betrayal upon my arrival in Teheran, I considered giving up the thought of continuing on into Russia. But at Teheran there were messages for me from both Roosevelt and Churchill. They enclosed copies of wires sent to Stalin, urging him not only to welcome me but to change his attitude toward the legitimate Polish government in London.

So we flew on—in a Russian plane because our RAF plane was not permitted to enter the USSR—and arrived in Moscow late on July 30, 1944. The reception was bleak. *Pravda* ignored our presence, although it was rapturous over the impending arrival of a member of the Danish underground. It was also lyrical on the question of the exchange, scheduled for the following day, of envoys between the USSR and the Lublin Committee, which had been recognized by Russia as the administrative body of Poland.

I saw Molotov shortly after my arrival that evening. He ignored the several messages from Churchill and Roosevelt, looked at me frigidly as I seated myself in his office, and asked, "Why did you come here? What have you got to say?"

"I came here to see Stalin," I answered, "and I ask your aid in helping me reach him. I wish to discuss with him the problems of our common fight against the Germans and the possibility of closer collaboration between the Red Army and our underground. We can provide a wealth of information that will be of help to the Red Army, in addition to physical aid with which you are already familiar.

"Beyond that extremely pressing question, I wish to talk to Stalin about Soviet-Polish relations."

Molotov did not appear to be impressed. "We'll take Warsaw soon; we are already about six miles from Warsaw," he said almost airily. "As for Stalin, he's very busy with military operations, but I'll try to make an appointment for you on the second or third of August."

Then he looked at me severely.

"But before you meet Stalin, you should see the Poles from the Polish Committee of National Liberation."

"I can see them," I answered. "But that's an internal question concerning only Poles. I'm here as Prime Minister of the Polish government to see the Prime Minister of Soviet Russia."

That ended the meeting abruptly. I returned to the house that had been

assigned to us in Moscow and went through a distressing forty-eight hours scanning reports from the Warsaw underground, relayed to me from London by British Ambassador to the USSR Clark Kerr (now Lord Inverchapel).

I finally saw Stalin at 9:30 P.M., August 3, 1944, in his Kremlin office.

The man who professedly wins elections by a 99 per cent vote is nonetheless the most heavily guarded individual on earth today. My visit had the full endorsement of the respective heads of the British and American governments, but my papers were scrutinized and rescrutinized at the main gate of the Kremlin. NKVD men led me through the yard to the door of a certain building in the enclosure; other NKVD men took me to a waiting room; still others were present and stared at me suspiciously as I stood in that room. Then I was admitted to the Red leader's large study.

Stalin was standing near a conference table that reached along one wall of the room. With him was his pale, nervous, young translator, Pavlov. Stalin wore his marshal's uniform, adorned by one single decoration. On the wall above him, curiously enough, were large oil paintings of two old czarist generals—Kutuzov and Suvorov. Relegated to an obscure spot near the door was a small photograph of Lenin.

"Won't you sit down?" Stalin asked. He took a place near the end of the conference table, his back against the wall. I sat opposite him, with Pavlov at the head of the long table and separating us. Stalin lighted a cigarette, exhaled the smoke, and made a gesture for me to begin.

"I'm glad to be here in Moscow on the anniversary of the Stalin-Sikorski agreement of 1941," I began, reminding him of a pact of friendship and aid that he had callously broken whenever it served his purposes.

"It is good also to be here at a time when the Soviet armies are defeating the Germans on Polish soil," I continued. "I'd like to discuss the Polish-Soviet relations, the collaboration to finish the fight against Germany, and the question of the future administration of Poland.

"But above all, since the fight within Warsaw has started, I want to appeal to you to bring immediate aid to our men in their pitifully unequal battles with the Germans."

Stalin looked back at me and answered:

"But you're not taking into consideration the agreement that has been reached between the Soviet Union and the Lublin Committee." It was the last

time I was to hear him use the word "Committee" in connection with that group. Thereafter he referred to it as "The Polish Government."

"You are speaking of something that has been done since I left London for Moscow, you know," I said.

He did not reply directly. Stalin seldom does. He can listen with considerable patience, even though his mind has long since been made up, but having heard his visitor, he moves on to another topic as if the first topic had never been mentioned. So now he said:

"The trouble with the Polish underground army is that it does not want to fight the Germans."

"You've been grossly misinformed!" I almost shouted. "Our Home Army began fighting Germans in 1939 and has never stopped fighting them." I reminded him of Sikorski's efforts in 1942-1943 to enlist his aid for that fighting and of Stalin's reply that, while he was "sorry to see Polish blood shed," it was too early to give help to our underground.

I reminded him, too, that there was a clear-cut record of our years of sabotaging German troop and supply trains moving across Poland to the Russian front, and of Russian communiqués telling of the aid given by the Polish underground in capturing of countless places in eastern Poland.

"Ah, yes, but what an army!" Stalin snorted. "It has neither tanks nor artillery."

"But that's one of the reasons I'm here to see you," I insisted. "Can you supply our men with tanks and artillery? Your forces are in the very suburbs of Warsaw and are near Home Army units in many other sections of Poland."

"I cannot trust the Poles," Stalin answered evenly. "They suspect me of wanting to occupy Poland again. They're making a lot of trouble for me."

I asked him to name an example.

"Well," he said after a bit of pondering, "there was the case of the commandant of your Home Army forces in the Chełm area. As we neared that region, he mobilized all able-bodied men from sixteen to sixty-five and joined in the fight!"

He stopped, as if I should understand his indignation, but I had to ask him what was wrong with such action.

"He should not have done this," Stalin replied. "We needed those men for the harvest. So I had to order the arrest of that commandant."

Startled at his reasoning, I launched into a defense of the patriotism and cooperation of the Polish people in face of their extreme hardships and dangers, but he cut me short this time.

"The Poles are a different people today than when you left there in 1939," he said. "New forces have arisen, new authorities have taken over in the past five years. Everything has changed." Before I could reply, he moved the talk along to the touchy matter of our frontiers.

"You must realize this," he said, "that nothing can be done for Poland if you do not recognize the Curzon line. For the loss of eastern Poland you'll get the Oder line in the west, including Wroclaw, Stettin, and East Prussia. Königsberg (I thought instantly of Roosevelt's assurances) will remain with the Soviet Union, as will the area around it."

I protested that this was a direct violation of the Atlantic Charter, whose principles the USSR had accepted, and of existing Polish-Soviet pacts. After hearing me out, Stalin shrugged and said:

"Maybe we can make some changes in the Curzon line that will be of benefit to Poland. But first you must reach an agreement with the Lublin Poles. Hereafter I intend to deal with only one Polish government, not two."

Professor Grabski, who had accompanied me to the meeting, reacted immediately. He moved close to Stalin and almost forcibly took Pavlov's place at the end of the table. This fine old Polish patriot began to beat on Stalin's table. He spoke for forty-five minutes in Russian about the criminal injustices that were being heaped on Poland.

Stalin listened to him thoughtfully, and when Grabski finished, winded, Stalin got up and patted the indignant old gentleman on the back and laughed, "You're a good agitator."

Then he reminisced about Warsaw, especially the picturesque old portion of the capital. He said: "We hoped to take Warsaw on August 5 or 6, but the Germans were defending it more savagely than we had expected. There would be a small delay in capturing the city."

"I'm eager to help your Home Army there," he went on. "But how can I? I don't know how to communicate with your commanders. I'd like to drop two of my communications officers in there to send me word about the situation."

I offered him every assistance and urged him to do this. He wandered along in his speech, however, returning to the general subject of Poland and re-

iterating his old pledges for a "strong, independent, and democratic" Polish nation. He talked for a long time, but it was extremely clear just what kind of Poland he wanted after the war. In view of what both he and everybody else already knew about Anglo-American appeasement and indifference, it was also apparent what he would get. Above all, I could see as he talked that he was determined that all Polish resistance, as exemplified by the Polish Home Army, would perish.

I met with the Lublin Poles on August 6 in the fruitless hope that I might appeal to whatever Polish blood was left in their veins to secure their support for the Home Army and the future democracy of our native land.

They were a motley bunch. But Molotov had met them at the airport with a great show of ceremony. *Pravda*, which still had not mentioned our own presence in Moscow, ran long articles in praise of them.

There was Edward Osóbka-Morawski, a former "co-op" clerk who had been named head of the new Communist-controlled, Polish "Socialist" Party; Wanda Wasilewska; Andrzej Witos, a frightened little man since his release from a Soviet death house; and General Michał Rola-Żymierski, unacceptable to the Home Army during the greater part of the occupation, who had ended up by joining the Communist forces.

I came to the point quickly.

"I spoke to Stalin the other night, and he expressed a willingness to help our forces in Warsaw," I said. Turning to Żymierski, I added, "As Commander in Chief of the Kościuszko Division you have good contacts with Red Army headquarters. It is now your duty—as a Pole—to bring help as quickly as possible. Our men are in desperate straits."

Żymierski started to reply, but Wanda Wasilewska, a stern, horse-faced fanatic, silenced him.

"There is no fighting in Warsaw," she said.

I showed her the frantic communications I had been receiving, including two dated August 2, one on August 3 and two on August 4:

We are engaged in heavy fighting with the Germans in the whole city of Warsaw. We defeated part of their forces with the use of armaments captured from the enemy, but we have difficulty securing ammunition.

Extremely urgent that mass dropping of ammunition and weapons on Warsaw be carried out today. There is no antiaircraft artillery.

Disastrous lack of ammunition. . . .

Request categorically immediate assistance in ammunition and antitank weapons today and on the following days. We are faced with fighting for at least several days, and we must be supplied all this time. We are doing our utmost to hold our capital—you must do likewise on your side.

At all costs, carry out dropping of ammunition.

"What does *that* look like?" I demanded of the woman.

"Well, if it's true," she finally said, "the help will soon come. After all, we want to establish ourselves there as soon as possible."

I repeated Stalin's statements about the future boundaries between Russia and Poland. "If we can get together here and now, I believe we can gain some advantage for Poland by approaching him as a unit," I appealed to these sinister, yet pathetic, Communist stooges.

"The Curzon line is most just for Poland," Wanda answered, thus writing off a mere 70,000 square miles of territory that the Red Army had invaded as an ally of Hitler in 1939. "Perhaps in the future we'll get a readjustment, but now is not the time to ask for it."

Witos spoke up weakly. "But, Madame," he said, "I think Mikołajczyk is right. Perhaps if we go to Stalin as a body—and if you refrain from speaking for us—we can. . . ."

That is as far as he got. Rather than reveal to me that there was a difference of opinion among them, Osóbka-Morawski adjourned the meeting with a statement that Boleslaw Bierut, destined to become President of Red-enslaved Poland, had been in Warsaw up to August 4 and had reported that there was no fighting. Bierut was not in Warsaw during that period, as a matter of fact. But facts meant nothing to these people.

After this first meeting with the Lublin Poles, I singled out Rola-Żymierski. I outlined for him the military plight of Bór-Komorowski's forces and appealed to him as a soldier to respond to the limit of his authority. He acknowledged that he knew of the fighting in Warsaw and promised to assist as best he could. He even promised to secure the release of a Polish Home Army figure, Colonel Filipkowski, who was arrested by the Reds after helping them free Lwów. I never saw Filipkowski again.

On August 7, 1944, I met Bierut. He is an old-line Communist who gave up his Polish citizenship in the early 1930's. He had performed many chores in many countries in the interests of spreading communism. Forlornly, I

appealed to him to exert his influence with Stalin to protect the sovereignty of the land he once called his own.

"Our relations with the USSR are more important than frontiers," he told me. Then he made me an offer. If I would return to Warsaw in agreement with the Lublin group and recognize him as president, he would appoint me prime minister of a Communist-controlled Polish government. He also offered to give minor cabinet posts in that government to three other independent party leaders. It would be an eighteen-member government, fourteen of which would be Communists or their agents.

"I cannot even discuss this with you," I told him. "First of all, I am already the Prime Minister of a legally formed government that, together with its underground arm, fought the Germans when you—as a Communist—were allied with Hitler. We were formed under a constitution for which I have no particular appetite. But at least it was a constitution of a legalized government, recognized throughout the war by the major Powers. My government has subscribed to the Atlantic Charter, signed the Lend-Lease deals, and made our connection with UNRRA. What you're asking me to do is sell out the Polish people. You're asking me to become a swine.

"I'd return to Poland tonight if I knew that we could sit down with the underground parliament and reach an agreement that would be constitutional and in the best interests of the Polish people," I concluded heatedly.

Bierut looked me over with hostility. "If you want to go to Poland as a friend in complete agreement with us, we will accept you," he said. "If you attempt to go as Prime Minister of the Polish government that is no longer recognized by the USSR, we'll arrest you."

"I have no business here," I said, getting up. "All I want now is to get back to London and report to my government what I have seen and heard in Moscow."

At the door, however, I turned once again to him, unable to resist the fading hope that aid somehow might reach Warsaw.

"I beg of you two things," I said. "Help Warsaw—and stop the Soviet arrests of the Home Army that is helping to liberate our country."

He made no answer.

I saw Molotov and Stalin once more before I left Moscow. Molotov apparently could not trust the Lublin Poles to tell him the truth, and hence he

had me come to his office—with them—to hear with his own ears the things I had said to them.

As for Stalin, he was less hospitable than before, assuming that such a thing is possible.

"Can you give me your word of honor," he asked, "that there is fighting going on in Warsaw? The Lublin Poles tell me there is no fighting at all."

"I can give you my word of honor that there is a fight there," I told him. "It is a desperate fight. I beg of you—who are in the strategic position—to give us aid."

He made a negative motion. "I had two of my communications officers dropped into Warsaw after I saw you the other day," he said. "The Germans killed both of them when they attempted to land by parachute."

This was a lie, I learned later. Both men landed successfully and made their way to the headquarters of General Antoni Chruściel Monter, Warsaw Home Army Commander. They eventually sent a number of messages to Moscow. At this time, however, I was able to hand to Stalin a message from a Red Army officer then in contact with the Home Army—Colonel Kalugin. It had been sent to London by Bór-Komorowski's radio for retransmission to Moscow:

Marshal Comrade Stalin. I am in personal contact with the Commander of Warsaw garrison, who is leading the heroic partisan fight of the nation against Hitlerite bandits. After acquainting myself with the general military situation, I came to the conclusion that, in spite of the heroism of the army and the entire Warsaw population, there are still needs that, if made good, would permit a speedier victory over a common foe.

The Russian officer who signed this message then listed the type and amount of ammunition and arms needed, and added:

German air force is destroying the city and killing the civilians. The heroic population of Warsaw trusts that, in a few hours time, you will give them armed support. Help me to get in touch with General Rokossovsky.

Stalin read the message solemnly. "I don't know this man Kalugin," he said. "I'll inquire about him. And I'll still do my best to help Warsaw. The Germans there are more difficult than we expected. But we'll liberate it soon."

As history knows, he waited until the Germans had killed or wounded nearly a quarter of a million of our people in the capital and after the capitulation.

lation of the Home Army had burned and dynamited Warsaw to extinction with systematic thoroughness. This was only possible because the Russians remained rooted in the suburbs.

Before I left Stalin, I could not resist telling him about one captured German officer's views of Germany's future. He predicted confidently that postwar Germany would embrace communism so devoutly that it would soon become the foremost Communist state and with the aid of intrinsic German ingenuity go on to rule the world, including Russia.

Stalin scoffed impatiently: "Communism on a German is like a saddle on a cow."

Stalin added that the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and France must remain close friends for many years after the war "because one can expect Germany to start a new war after about twenty-five years."

By August 9 my small group began to wonder if we had not tacitly become prisoners of the Communists. We had asked for a plane two days before but had heard no word from our hostile hosts. However, at 2 A.M. on the tenth we abruptly received a call, telling us to be at the Moscow airport at 4 A.M., ready to leave for Teheran. We were ready.

Osóbka-Morawski took advantage of our departure to announce that Bór-Komorowski was not really in Warsaw or anywhere near the fight.

I tried to be as optimistic as I could, in the hope of showing the Russians that we were still eager to cooperate if such cooperation did not oblige us to yield our identity. But it was a hard pose in face of the messages from the underground that awaited me when I reached London on August 13, 1944. One, dated August 10, read:

These are our conditions of fighting: We have received from you but one, small, dropped supply. On the German-Russian front, lull since the third. But for the exception of a short speech by the Deputy Prime Minister from London on the eighth, nothing to comfort us. The soldiers and the population of the capital look in vain to the skies, expecting Allied help. They only see German aircraft against a background of German smoke.

The population feel surprised, deceived, and begin to revile. Let us know if help for Warsaw was discussed at Moscow. I emphatically repeat that without ammunition and the bombing of objectives held by the enemy our fight is due to collapse in a few days. If we get the help asked for above the fight will continue. I expect from you the greatest effort in this respect.

The German aircraft today dropped leaflets with an ultimatum signed by their

Front Commander. The ultimatum urges the population to leave Warsaw and proceed westward, holding handkerchiefs in their hands. Those unable to work will receive assistance in settling in the General Government, others will be provided with work. Who "lets himself be exploited as a tool in Bolshevik hands" will be held responsible and may expect no mercy. The ultimatum expires on a fixed date.

And this on August 11:

. . . German attacks accompanied by artillery fire from armored trains, mortars, grenades, and antitank guns. Enormous, overwhelming superiority of enemy fire.

And on the twelfth:

Today the enemy tried to annihilate our forces in the Old Town sector. The situation was serious. Objectives changed hands many times. Overpowering artillery fire. At dusk we controlled the situation by means of counterattacks. If no supplies of ammunition forthcoming, our situation will be extremely serious. On Soviet side, lull continues. Great losses in men. Great destruction.

And on the thirteenth:

In the attack from the south on the Old Town the enemy made use of a new weapon—fire from a gunboat that appeared on the Vistula. The forces in the central sector—owing to the supplies dropped in the course of the night—were able to make an offensive action aimed at engaging some of the enemy units attacking the Old Town. . . . The enemy lost many tanks and artillery equipment.

Fighting Warsaw sends to the heroic airmen words of gratitude and appreciation. We bow to the crews who have given their lives.

On my return to London the *Daily Worker*, which had been dutifully following the Communist Line to the effect that there was no fighting in Warsaw, printed a TASS story under a headline that read: POLES DID NOT CONSULT USSR ON WARSAW RISING.

Said the TASS dispatch:

Recently reports appeared in the foreign press emanating from the Polish radio and press about a revolt begun in Warsaw on August 1 by order of the Polish *émigrés* in London.

The Polish press and radio of the *émigré* government in London state that the people revolting in Warsaw are in contact with the Soviet Command and that the latter is not sending them any help. TASS is authorized to state that these statements of the foreign press are either the result of misunderstanding or a libel on the Soviet High Command.

TASS is in possession of information that the London Polish circles responsible for the Warsaw uprising made no attempt to coordinate the revolt with the Soviet

High Command. The responsibility for the Warsaw events thus lies entirely with the Polish *émigré* circles in London.

It is hardly necessary to repeat that the British and American governments and military commands, as well as the Soviet commands, were completely informed at all times about the plans of the Polish Home Army.

In the lower echelons of the British Foreign Office there were petulant grumblings that the rising had been "ill timed and unrealistic," which must have pleased the Russians who had been instrumental in committing our underground leaders in Warsaw to the battle by means of that mocking call to arms of July 29, 1944. But Churchill was sympathetic, as were the Americans, when I appealed for more air aid. Churchill, especially, remembered that 1,800 Polish fliers had lost their lives in the RAF and that more than forty per cent of the total number of Polish pilots engaged in the Battle of Britain had been killed.

The RAF had been running Liberators up to Poland from Italian bases, supplying various sectors of our underground movement. We now asked Churchill to concentrate this supply upon Warsaw. He so directed the RAF, but the Germans quickly countered. They moved additional antiaircraft guns into Warsaw and alerted their night fighters to hit the lumbering planes as they flew over the Alps on the way to and from the capital.

The RAF crews at first were British, South African, and Polish. Their losses steadily rose until Air Chief Marshal Slessor called an abrupt halt to the Warsaw operation but continued flights to the less heavily defended areas of Poland.

The decision—though later amended—was a blow to the underground in the capital. At no time, however, did we cease efforts to supply our forces. And some of these appeals went to the Russians.

On September 11, Bór-Komorowski appealed to Marshal Rokossovsky to "send us assistance and to coordinate our efforts." He told the Red Army leader—whose headquarters were only a few miles removed from the city—that "the population of the city suffers greatly from heavy German artillery and dive bombers. I do urgently request you to counteract these two means of fighting." He appealed for guns, aerial help, and everything else that would enable him to aid in what he called the Red Army's "decisive attack on Warsaw."

With RAF service to Warsaw temporarily suspended, I appealed to the

United States Army Air Forces to carry on with the work. The Americans had set up a shuttle service from Great Britain to Russia some time before with German targets being bombed on both legs of the shuttle. But this, too, had been suspended by mutual agreement. The Americans were eager to cooperate in the task of supplying Warsaw but pointed out that because of the distance involved—and the shortening of the period of daylight—it would be necessary to obtain permission to land on Soviet-held air strips.

I asked Churchill to obtain that permission and addressed a similar appeal to Roosevelt. While I awaited the results, I received this message from Stalin:

I must inform you that after our conversations I gave orders to Soviet commanders to parachute weapons into the Warsaw area. This was done. In addition, we dropped a parachutist, but he was unable to complete his duties because he was killed by the Germans.

After a closer study of the matter I have become convinced that the Warsaw action, which was undertaken without the knowledge of the Soviet command, is a thoughtless adventure causing unnecessary losses among the inhabitants. In addition, it should be mentioned that a calumnious campaign has been started by the Polish London Government which seeks to present the illusion that the Soviet Command deceived the Warsaw population.

In view of this state of affairs, the Soviet Command cuts itself away from the Warsaw adventure and cannot take any responsibility for it.

I answered that the uprising in Warsaw was not an "adventure" but a part of the well-conceived "Tempest" plan, which I had explained to him at length. I pointed out, too, that the important thing now was not who was responsible for the opening of the fight but the fight itself—especially since it was in opposition to our common enemy, Germany. I asked his aid in the bombing of German airfields in the region, the sending of supplies and material, and urged him to grant quick permission to the Americans to use the fields the Red Army held.

Roosevelt replied to me on August 24. His letter involved much more than the question of air aid and his request for the use of Russian landing strips. The letter²³ marked his acceptance of the Lublin Poles as the bona fide leaders of the nation.

The British War Cabinet soon overruled the RAF and ordered a resumption of the air supply service to Warsaw. The RAF planes thereafter were manned by Polish crews almost exclusively. The losses were of a suicidal



International News Photo

June 7, 1944: "I will see to it that Poland does not come out of the war injured," Roosevelt promised me at the White House. But Stalin had other ideas. "In all our dealings with Stalin," Roosevelt said to me during the same visit, "we must keep our fingers crossed" (page 60).



Leonard McCombe

September, 1944 "After sixty three days of battle, destruction, and hell," with no help coming from the Russians who were encamped across the Vistula, General Bor surrendered the Home Army units in Warsaw. The Germans knocked the Polish capital to pieces in the course of the fighting and after the surrender (page 90).

figure. The amount of supplies dropped was tragically insufficient. Inside Warsaw there was a shocking shortage of food, water, medical supplies, and—always—ammunition

I redoubled my efforts to obtain American aid and saw Churchill on September 1 to ask him what progress had been made with Stalin. The Prime Minister was ill and received me in his bedroom.

"Stalin rejected our proposals," he snorted. "I couldn't believe it when I read it! I got so angry that I told Roosevelt that he should give the green light to the American planes and burst right through and land on the Red air bases. They wouldn't dare shoot at those American planes!"

I spoke to Poland by radio later that day:

Heroes of Warsaw:

There are moments in the lives of nations when phraseology must be put aside, when any mention of one's duties, merits, or ideals, or the paying of homage by mere words is not betimes

I know that when I am addressing men standing in the face of death, who have either to endure and win or perish, I must use the most simple words. . . .

As Premier of the Polish government I take full coresponsibility for the decisions passed by your political and military leaders—the Deputy Premier, the Ministers of the Polish government acting in the homeland, General Bór and the Council of National Unity.

Having the ground to do so, you stood up in right time to wage an open fight against the Germans for the sake of independence and freedom and to protect the population.

You rose, as since March, 1944 rose your brethren everywhere east of Warsaw and as they are still continuing to rise, helping at the same time the heroic and victorious Soviet armies in their fight against the enemy.

The fate of war has decreed that the liberation of Warsaw has not taken place as soon as was rightly expected by all.

The fight is still continuing. You are fighting, and I know you will fight. You have no other issue, and each doubt or breakdown will mean death instead of victory.

You have the right and wish to endure—to win and live.

You have the right to assistance. No one may, out of opportunist or political reasons, diminish the value of your efforts undertaken with the purest of intentions.

You did not get help due to you in spite of all the devotion of the British, South African, and Polish airmen. Lately, the latter were the only ones who helped you.

We do all we can to make you get the help in an adequate measure and in time. I have not lost hope that it will be done. If help is not to be given, I will warn you of it.

I avail myself of this opportunity to address once again in public Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt, and Prime Minister Churchill.

Leaders of great Powers! Commanders of powerful and victorious land and air armies!

Warsaw is waiting; the whole Polish nation is waiting; the opinion of the world is waiting. Do all you can to provide means for further fighting and to liberate this city and the population fighting on its ruins, drenched with blood.

They are fighting and spilling their blood, but they arduously wish to live for Poland.

Heroes of Warsaw! Besides all the crimes perpetrated upon the civilian population, the Germans wish to demoralize and unnerve you by threatening to burn Warsaw.

Those who are murdering you, pretend—by spreading false information—to turn into your defenders.

I wish to declare with full responsibility that for burning the remnants of Warsaw, should they ever dare to do it, for murdering the civilian population and the Home Army, protected by combatant's rights, we shall hold them to account.

We promise, and we shall keep our word if the mortally wounded beast will dare to carry out its threat.

I take leave from you in the conviction that you will endure until help and liberation come to you, that you will have your share in the victory of the Allied world.

We shall rebuild our cities and villages in a free and independent Poland, and we shall do all to prevent the German beast from menacing the world again by new acts of brigandage.

The next day brought this tragic reply:

Warsaw is waiting. We received yesterday Prime Minister Mikolajczyk's message in a soldierly spirit. We did not have and have no choice. The soldiers of Wola, Mokotów, the Inner City, and Powiśle are faithful soldiers. We believe in the cause of our struggle and therefore we shall go on fighting to the last drop of our blood. . . . The democratic world looks on whilst thousands of old people, women, and children are perishing. Warsaw is waiting for help.

Several days later Churchill and Roosevelt, then in Quebec, jointly wired Stalin, demanding that he open the Red-controlled fields to the American planes. And on the tenth of the month—a full month after the Americans had indicated a willingness to supply Warsaw—Stalin finally consented. He added almost immediately, however, that "technical difficulties" would force the Russians to ask for a slight delay.

During that requested delay, on the night of September 11 (it was the forty-second day of the uprising), the Red Air Force suddenly appeared over

Warsaw. The Russian planes indeed dropped the ammunition for which Bór-Komorowski's men had cried since the hour of their betrayal. The planes dropped guns, too. But the ammunition did not fit the guns, nor did it fit any guns known to be in the hands of the men of the rising. The planes dropped food in quantity but dropped it either with defective chutes or with no chutes at all. It smashed against the ruins of Warsaw and was wasted.

Moscow, having beaten the Americans to the aid of Warsaw, crowed happily through its propaganda mills that the USSR alone was the true friend of the Polish people.

The Americans attempted to come on September 16 but were forced back by thick weather. On the eighteenth they got through. They droned over Warsaw with 104 bombers, escorted part of the way by 200 fighters. Two of the supply-laden bombers and two fighters were lost. The desperately grateful people of Warsaw came up from their ruins and sewers to cheer the Americans. Now they could fight Germans a little longer. Maybe they could even hold out to the day of liberation.

As the planes swept over Warsaw, I broadcast from London:

Today you've seen the American forces bringing help to fighting Warsaw. This is a symbol of how the Allies are trying to help you in your desperate fight. . . . I hope this help will bring you some relief in your historic fight against the Germans . . . your fight for a really free and independent Poland.

The only land attack on Warsaw made by the nearby Red Army in support of the Home Army was delivered by the Kościuszko Division commanded by General Berling. There had been some Red Army artillery shelling of certain German positions in Warsaw, spotted by Home Army men. But as the Kościuszko Division forged across the Vistula to help its blood brothers in the city, that artillery fire suddenly ceased. With no cover the advancing Poles were annihilated by the defending German forces. General Berling was removed from his command and returned to Moscow for "further training."

After the American relief mission was completed, the Moscow radio opened a vicious attack on Bór-Komorowski and myself. This station, which had done so much to entice Warsaw to arise and fight in the expectation of, and promise of, immediate aid from the Red Army, now accused us of ordering a "senseless uprising."

On September 29 I received an especially tragic message from Bór-Komorowski, reporting that he could not hold out for more than a few additional days. I made one last attempt to reach the heart of the Russians, paraphrasing the Bór-Komorowski message in a note to Stalin, which I asked Ambassador Lebedev to forward. It read:

Your Excellency:

After sixty days relentless fighting against the common enemy, the defenders of Warsaw have reached the limit of endurance. General Bór reports that after the fall of the southern sector of resistance, Warsaw can hold out only for several days more. At this extreme hour of need I appeal to you, Marshal, to issue orders for immediate operations, which would relieve the garrison of Warsaw and result in the liberation of the capital. General Bór addressed the same appeal to Marshal Rokossovsky.

Stanislaw Mikolajczyk

Lebedev, however, refused to send the message on. Forlornly, I took it to Churchill and asked him to transmit it. Churchill was indignant over Lebedev's action. He dispatched it immediately, and it was just as immediately ignored by Stalin.

Churchill had been subject to a few barbs in the House of Commons the day before, when members queried him sharply on Russia's treatment of Poland, especially on its refusal to help those fighting in Warsaw.

Churchill, who only a short time before had been so angered by Stalin's refusal of landing bases that he had even urged Roosevelt to order United States planes to land on such fields willy-nilly, now said:

"Marshal Stalin has repeatedly declared himself in favor of a strong, friendly Poland, sovereign and independent. In this our great eastern Ally is in the fullest accord with His Majesty's Government and also, judging from American public statements, in the fullest accord with the United States."

At 8 P.M., October 2, 1944, I had to report to Churchill that Bór-Komorowski, at last beyond all human endurance, had surrendered to the Germans.

This was one of the last radio messages to leave Warsaw. A shaken voice said:

This is the stark truth. We were treated worse than Hitler's satellites, worse than Italy, Rumania, Finland. May God, who is just, pass judgment on the terrible injustice suffered by the Polish nation, and may He punish accordingly all those who are guilty.

Your heroes are the soldiers whose only weapons against tanks, planes, and guns

were their revolvers and bottles filled with petrol. Your heroes are the women who tended the wounded and carried messages under fire, who cooked in bombed and ruined cellars to feed children and adults, and who soothed and comforted the dying. Your heroes are the children who went on quietly playing among the smoldering ruins. These are the people of Warsaw.

Immortal is the nation that can master such universal heroism. For those who have died have conquered, and those who live on will fight on, will conquer, and again bear witness that Poland lives when the Poles live.

From London I broadcast:

Fellow Poles! After sixty-three days of fighting and struggle, yesterday at eight o'clock in the evening fell the last center of resistance in Warsaw—the capital's midtown section where, in addition to the soldiers of the Home Army, some 260,000 civilians were still congregated.

The midtown section fell after having been subjected to the terrible bombardment of German artillery and airplanes concentrated on this sector in the last day after the fall of Mokotów on the twenty-seventh and of Żolibórz on the thirtieth of September.

Military action ceased after all supplies had been used up, after the garrison and the population had reached the point of starvation, suffering from the lack of medical and hospital equipment for the thousands of wounded, dying unaided in the cellars. Military action ceased after all attempts to cut through the German ring had failed, after all hope of assistance had faded in the light of a public statement from Moscow on September 30 that since efforts to force the Vistula directly from the Praga suburb had been unsuccessful, Warsaw could not be taken until the city was surrounded.

Sixty-three days of battle, destruction, and hell; sixty-three days of hope and despair; sixty-three days of freedom, and now a new enslavement for those who survived those days.

Just as from March on—in Volhynia, in the Nowogrodek and Vilna areas, in Lwów, in the Lublin and Rzeszów section and everywhere—the Poles emerged from the underground at the sound of the approaching Soviet front and engaged the Germans in open battle, so Warsaw rushed into this combat.

On July 31, the roar of the approaching Soviet Army's artillery shook Warsaw's walls. Over the city Soviet airmen and the *Luftwaffe* were engaged in combat. The civilian German population had left Warsaw. German newspapers had suspended publication. The Gestapo and the army had ordered the mass evacuation of the entire civilian Polish population. German reinforcements from the west began to flow toward Warsaw. Reports came in stating that the Red Army was only 20 kilometers from Warsaw's outskirts.

At 3 P.M. on August 1 the explosion of a mine placed under the building of the German command gave the signal to begin the battle.

Warsaw plunged into the fight—to gain control of the capital and to build barricades.

The Poles took the greater part of the city and a section of the Praga suburb. In those days Warsaw said, "We fear nothing—only give us arms."

On August 5 and 6 the bridges over the Vistula and the Main Railroad Station kept changing hands.

The Germans tied Polish women and children to tanks. German strategy aimed at taking the streets leading to the Poniatowski and Kierbedź bridges. They struck with the full force of their tanks, burning the houses fronting on the street, seeking to open a passage for the transporting of reinforcements to Praga. The centers of Polish resistance cleared the area of Germans, taking them prisoners. The Poles entrenched themselves chiefly in the center of the city, in Mokotów, and in the old town. Going over to the offensive, they extended their holdings to Żolibórz.

On August 8 German artillery and the German Air Force began to bombard the centers of Polish resistance. Newly arrived detachments attacked the Poles with tanks and flamethrowers. Engineers began a systematic action of blowing up one house after another. They gained nothing. They threw armored trains into action, which fired upon those parts of the city held by the insurgents. The insurgents counterattacked. They destroyed and captured many tanks.

On August 10 the Germans dropped leaflets appealing for a cessation of the fighting over forged Allied signatures.

On the eleventh—a German ultimatum. Warsaw rejects it with contempt and more fighting.

The Germans throw into the battle Goliath tanks loaded with dynamite, the heaviest type of cannon, and air mines. They begin to shoot hostages. Flying at rooftop level, the *Luftwaffe* bombs house after house. Warsaw life moves from the rubble into the cellars and the sewers. A cry goes out to the world to send arms and to bomb German airfields, artillery positions, heavy canon, and armored trains. The Germans introduce asphyxiating shells. In vain.

Forced to halt their communications over Warsaw, the Germans build pontoon bridges to maintain contact with, and transportation to, Praga.

August passes in relentless fighting, and September begins.

September 4 saw the destruction of the powerhouse and the waterworks. The fight continued in the dark despite the lack of water and the growing food shortage. The help from Italy, brought to Warsaw at a tremendous sacrifice by British, South African, and Polish airmen, could not satisfy even a portion of the need. On September 9 the situation grew very critical.

Finally on September 10, after an interval, fresh help arrived from Italy.

On September 11 Soviet airplanes appeared over Warsaw interrupting the destruction of the city by the *Luftwaffe*.

On September 12—the storming of Praga and the parachuting of a few small loads, repeated during the night of the thirteenth.

The help was still insufficient, exhaustion mounted; the number of untended wounded in the cellars grew; the enemy surrounded the defenders with an even tighter ring; but the critical situation passed.

On September 18 a great American relief expedition, waiting for flying weather for several days, left Great Britain.

On September 20 direct contact with Marshal Rokossovsky was established.

Meanwhile, however, the Germans turned on the pressure. Mokotów fell. Attempts to force the Vistula from the direction of Praga failed.

On the twenty-ninth General Bór urgently appealed to Marshal Rokossovsky for help in the shape of a renewed thrust to forestall a catastrophe that was otherwise imminent, especially since German artillery and the German Air Force, encountering no opposition, were resuming their bombardment, and since exhaustion, starvation, and lack of medical facilities were taking their toll.

On the thirtieth Żolibórz fell, and it became obvious that Warsaw could be freed only after its encirclement, that is, after some period of time.

After their conquest of Żolibórz and Mokotów, the Germans concentrated their pressure and bombardment on the midtown center with its more than a quarter of a million civilian inhabitants, thereby finally breaking the insurgents' resistance.

And now, as the radio station Błyskawica has said, these people who for two months were free must now become slaves again.

And now these people who all without exception—the young and the old, men, women and children, regardless of their station in life or their political beliefs—have given the highest proof of self-sacrifice and heroism in the battle for freedom; these people are descending into the darkness at a time when the sun of freedom is rising for others.

These people, who at the moment of the most heavy fighting, have not even been spared the moral torture of uncertainty about the fate of their comrades-in-arms who had begun the fight before them in areas lying to the east of them.

Fellow Poles! We pay tribute to the memory of the fallen. They rest in the rubble of Warsaw.

Their blood and sacrifice will not be in vain.

Out of the depths of our sorrowing and mourning hearts; out of the bottom of our hearts filled with unconsolable regret that although, through no fault of our own, the battle in Warsaw has ended in this way; we swear on the memory of the fallen and on the blood that has been shed that we will not fritter away, or permit to be reduced, the capital that they have earned by showing to the world that no price is too high for a Pole to pay for true freedom and independence.

Every Pole, every Polish soldier, airman, and sailor will pay the Germans for what they have done in Warsaw.

The fight is continuing. The end of the Germans is in sight, and Poland—despite the clouds in her sky—must and will be truly strong, free, and independent.

With clenched fists and teeth curbing the outbursts of our sorrow and sadness,

we shall go forward to our fatherland, to our country, to our homes—to the freedom that must shine for us.

We take leave of you who have survived. We do not take leave of you for long. The day of ultimate freedom and independence is nigh.

I set about the task of getting air aid for those elements of the Home Army that still fought Germans in the cities and villages to the west of Warsaw.

The cream of our remaining youth in Poland had been virtually wiped out by German guns in league with Russian compliance. A million people were living in Warsaw when the rising against the Germans began. A quarter of these, including the bulk of the 40,000, incredibly valiant men who came up to fight the enemy on August 1, 1944, were killed, wounded, or were missing by the time of capitulation. Some 350,000 of the people of Warsaw were forcibly evacuated, mostly to Germany and slave labor or murder. In January, 1945, when the Russians entered the city, they found only death.

The declaration of British and American governments recognizing the Combatant's rights of the Polish Underground had forced the Germans to regard the Home Army as prisoners of war and to treat the civilian population as human beings. The Germans only partly carried out their pledges, for on October 17, 1944, we received in London this message:

The population, forcibly evacuated from Warsaw, is receiving no help whatsoever. The people are in a state of utter exhaustion; among them are many sick and wounded. There are no drugs or medical aid. People who are seriously ill are lying by the roadside in the cold. Hundreds of thousands camp in the open fields without food or shelter. Families are being separated.

The Germans have arrested all men between the ages of sixteen and forty and are deporting them in the direction of the Reich. Transports are leaving every day. Some go straight to the notorious death camp of Oświęcim. Up to October 14, 12,000 people from Warsaw were sent to Oświęcim. Their fate is death. On October 7 the Germans began the mass murder of Polish prisoners in Oświęcim in stationary and mobile gas chambers of the type fitted on lorries. The lorries packed with people drive to Maczki, a place 30 miles north of Oświęcim. There the gas chambers are put in operation."

This was the hideous end of a brave people's fight for their capital.

"Traitors! They surrendered to the Germans!" the Moscow radio said. Three months later the Red Army marched into the place, bringing the NKVD men and renegade Polish expatriates who, protected by Red Army guns, claimed the streets made sacred by the blood of a free people.

Chapter Seven

ANATOMY OF APPEASEMENT

*We pursue an agreement
Stalin prefers his stooges
Shocking details of Teheran
Churchill backtracks
Stalin insists on half our country
I resign as Premier*



THE desperate plight of the Polish underground in the summer of 1944, when it was beset—as in 1939—by both Nazis and Reds, did not preclude its participation in matters dealing with the political future of the country.

I reported fully to the underground the fruitless nature of my trip to Moscow in August, the stubbornness of Stalin, and the way in which the authority of the Lublin Poles was growing as they basked in the favor of the Kremlin.

I drew up the draft of a new plan to solve the Polish-Soviet problem and submitted it to the cabinet and the underground. It would have been senseless to stand still while such political and military forces opposed us. We had to find a way out; we had to offer new proposals.

Our new plan,²⁴ as revised and approved by the cabinet and underground, was submitted to representatives of the Russian, British, and American gov-

ernments on August 30, 1944. In it we provided for a Polish government based on equal representation of the four main prewar parties: the Peasant Party, the National Party, the Polish Socialist Party, the Christian Labor Party, and fifth—the Polish Workers' Party (Communist). Groups responsible for the pre-1939 system of government were ruled out from participating in the government.

The main job of the new government, which was to come into being as soon as Warsaw was liberated, was to bring about a resumption of diplomatic relations—and a postwar alliance—between Poland and Russia. Free elections to the Constitutional Diet were to be arranged, based on the secret ballot and proportional suffrage. The new government would administer the liberated Polish lands, conclude an agreement with Russia defining the forms of collaboration with the Red Army, undertake certain social reforms (with priority going to agriculture), and foster and maintain alliances with Great Britain, France, and Czechoslovakia, and friendship with the United States. While some allowance for change in our eastern borders was made, we insisted on keeping such main centers of our cultural life and such prime sources of raw materials as lie to the east of the Curzon line. We also proposed to remove Germans from whatever territories we were to receive from Germany in the north and west. A voluntary exchange of Polish, White Russian, and Ukrainian peoples was to be carried out. Finally, we provided for a war cabinet to take care of all military problems attendant upon the war's close.

The British and Americans indicated, through conversations, that they favored this plan. But Russia remained silent. After a month I approached Lebedev and inquired how the plan had been received in Moscow. He said: "It was turned over to the Lublin Committee. Since there is no answer, it must be held unsatisfactory."

The British were infinitely more friendly. "The British government endorses the Polish plan," Eden told me at the Foreign Office. I asked to see Churchill once again to gain his impression of the plan and seek his support. But the Prime Minister, I learned, was busy with preparations to fly to Moscow for another meeting with Stalin.

Churchill wrote me from Moscow early in October, 1944, just after the capitulation of the Warsaw underground army.

"I am sorry that it was not possible for me to see you before I left for Moscow," his letter read, "but I should like you to know that one of the main

purposes the Foreign Secretary and I have in mind in making this visit is to discuss the Polish problem further with Marshal Stalin, with a view to enabling the conversations you yourself began in Moscow to be resumed at an early date.

"In that event I hope that you and whatever colleagues you think necessary to bring with you will be able to fly at once to join us in Moscow. I am sure that this is the only way in which we can break the present deadlock. . . ."

I answered that I was grateful for Churchill's efforts to break the impasse and said that I would go to Moscow if the object were conversations with the Russian government, not with the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The basis for conversations, I said, should be the plan we had communicated to the Big Three on August 30. Beyond this plan, I said, we could not go.

Eden answered that "this is the last chance for the Polish government to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union." He and Churchill would be present when we sat down with Stalin and would endorse our new plan, he said. If this meeting bore fruit, all parties to it would then meet with the Lublin Poles. At the end of the letter he urged that we must take immediate advantage of what he termed the "friendly atmosphere" around the Kremlin. "It would be unforgivable if you miss this opportunity," he concluded.

I arrived in Moscow on October 12, 1944, with Professor Grabski, General Tabor and Polish Foreign Minister Tadeusz Romer. Once again, the controlled Russian press ignored us. General Tabor, a great authority on how to combat Nazi forces and Gestapo intelligence from the underground, was refused permission to remain in Moscow until after he had revealed his true name and his complete history to the NKVD. He, who had done so much to augment the sweep of the Red Army across Poland, was now treated with the hostility of an enemy.

We met on the thirteenth with Stalin, Churchill, and Eden. Harriman was the observer for the United States. Molotov, the chairman, seated us around an oval table and welcomed the American and the Britishers. At the end of his flowery speech he referred to my party as "our Polish guests" and then unexpectedly called on me to speak first.

I restated the postwar plan that Stalin had apparently ignored, emphasized its fairness to all parties and its consonance with all existing Big Three declarations, and concluded, "Our aim is to bring about an agreement be-

tween Poland and Russia, not between Russia and a handful of Poles—arbitrarily and unilaterally chosen by a foreign power.”

Unexpectedly, Churchill was the first to comment on my speech. “You mention that, under this plan, the Red Army would be asked to leave Poland when hostilities there have ceased,” he said somewhat critically. “What about their lines of communication?”

“We’d be happy to protect them,” I answered. “We are an ally, not an enemy.”

Stalin spoke up. “You say this plan has the backing of the Polish underground. I doubt that it is possible for them to have engaged in such work lately.”

“Marshal, perhaps you forget that as a younger man, you, too, were in an underground, yet you remained active and made plans and programs that affected the future of your country,” I said.

I meant it as a kind of dare to him, but he suddenly grinned and was pleased.

“Ah, yes,” he recalled. “We held six big congresses and about twenty-five meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party while I was underground.”

“So you see,” I put in, “we have done the same.”

“What about the Lublin Committee?” Churchill asked. “Was its advice sought?”

“I am a realist,” I said. “I know there’s no possibility for the merger of the legal Polish government with the Lublin Committee. So I went much deeper than the Lublin Poles. I went to the Polish people . . . to Polish public opinion . . . to solve the problem. To find a solution we propose that the postwar Polish government include all parties, including the Communist.”

“The Lublin government should have a bigger share in the postwar Polish government,” Churchill intoned, antagonistically.

“Your plan has two big defects,” Stalin said. “It ignores the Lublin Poles, who have done such a good job in that part of Poland which the Soviet Army has liberated. And, secondly, if any Polish government wants relations with the Soviet Union, it must recognize the Curzon line as an actuality.”

Stalin thought a moment and then added, “Perhaps the rest of your plan is acceptable. But these two flaws must be corrected.”

Churchill now expressed a great and sudden happiness.

“I see now a new hope for agreement,” he said with enthusiasm. “Regarding

the new frontier along the Curzon line, I must announce in the name of the British government that, taking into account the huge losses suffered by the USSR in this war and how the Red Army has helped liberate Poland, the Curzon line must be your eastern frontier.

"Don't worry," he added, looking at me. "We will see to it that for the land you lose in the east there will be compensations in Germany, in East Prussia, and Silesia. You'll get a nice outlet to the sea, a good port at Danzig, and the priceless minerals of Silesia.

"You'll have a nice big country. Not the one created at Versailles, certainly, but a real, solid, new home in which the Polish nation can live and develop in security, freedom, and prosperity."

He was watching my face. After a bit he said, "And if I should sit at the peace table, I'll make strong use of these same arguments."

I looked at Stalin. "You accuse me of ignoring the Lublin Committee," I said. "You're ignoring the Polish government, which has fought the Germans, our common foe, for five years. You're ignoring the Polish government that created strong armies, a navy and an air force and that now fights on all fronts!"

"I recognize this," Stalin answered. "I have given the proper credit."

"But you haven't," I insisted. "Other governments have been reinstated in liberated areas, but not the Polish government!"

He looked impatiently at me. "I want no argument," he said.

"Neither do I," I answered. "But you mention the 'good work' of the Lublin Committee. Yet it has permitted your agents to arrest and deport some of the very Home Army men who helped the Red Army liberate part of Poland . . . men your own commanders sometimes had decorated for valor."

Stalin laughed. "Things are bad everywhere," he said.

"Anyway," I said, "I cannot accept the Curzon line. I have no authority to yield 48 per cent of our country, no authority to forsake millions of my countrymen and leave them to their fate. If I agreed, everyone would have the right to say, 'It was for this that the Polish soldiers fought—a politician's sellout.'"

"You're an imperialist," he answered. Then he went into a lengthy argument in which he insisted that the Polish lands east of the Curzon line were, in fact, parts of White Russia and the Ukraine. This, of course, was not true. He spoke again of heavy Red Army and Russian civilian losses, but I re-

mined him of Poland's losses, which, proportionately, were the greatest suffered by an Ally fighting Germany.

"If Soviet losses, great as they are, entitle the USSR to half of Poland, then Poland's losses demand at least that our country be returned to us in the east as it was before the war," I argued. I concluded by saying that even if we did yield the vast area, we still would have no guarantee on the future independence of what was left of Poland.

"Who is threatening the independence of Poland?" Stalin thundered. "Soviet Russia?"

It might have been the time to say "Yes!" But I had come to Moscow charged with effecting an accord. I answered only that we wanted the full independence and the freedom we had so richly earned.

However, there was no way of evading the matter of the Curzon line and its acceptance, and when I continued to argue against it, Molotov suddenly stopped me roughly.

"But all this was settled at Teheran!" he barked. He looked from Churchill to Harriman, who were silent. I asked for details of Teheran. And then he added, still with his eyes on Churchill and the American Ambassador:

"If your memories fail you, let me recall the facts to you. We all agreed at Teheran that the Curzon line must divide Poland. You will recall that President Roosevelt agreed to this solution and strongly endorsed the line. And then we agreed that it would be best not to issue any public declaration about our agreement."

Shocked, and remembering the earnest assurances I had personally had from Roosevelt at the White House, I looked at Churchill and Harriman, silently begging them to call this damnable deal a lie. Harriman looked down at the rug. Churchill looked straight back at me.

"I confirm this," he said quietly.

The admission made him angry, and he demanded that I agree then and there to the Russian demands. He reminded me of Britain's aid to Poland and of my duty now to accede to demands that Britain had come to support. I could answer only that while there were no words to express Poland's gratitude for Britain's war aid, I personally had no authority to agree to give up half of Poland.

"I didn't expect to be brought here to participate in a new partition of my country," I shouted.

"You don't have to make a public announcement of your decision," Churchill urged. "I don't want to put you in a difficult position with the Polish people."

I could make no private deal either, I told him. So he went on:

"But you can at least agree that the Curzon line is the temporary frontier, and remember, you may appeal for adjustment at the peace conference."

But before he could continue, Stalin rose indignantly.

"I want this made very clear," he said gruffly. "Mr. Churchill's thought of any future change in the frontier is not acceptable to the Soviet government. We will not change our frontiers from time to time. That's all!"

Churchill held out his hands, looked up to the ceiling in despair, and wheezed. We filed out silently.

In a subsequent meeting with Churchill and Eden, the Prime Minister frankly blamed me for not appeasing the Russians early in 1944, when enough of the secret agreements of Teheran had been revealed to indicate that the Big Three—without recourse to Polish opinion—had decided to split our country. My stubborn refusal to consent to this cleavage at that time was what caused Stalin to set up the Lublin Committee, he charged.

"How near we got at the beginning of the year!" he said, stalking around the room. "If you had come to an agreement with the Russians at that time, you would not have today those Lublin people. They are going to be a frightful nuisance. They will build up a rival government and gradually take over authority in Poland."

I reminded him again of the Atlantic Charter and other pacts that directly or indirectly pledged sovereign rights to Poland.

"I shall tell Parliament that I have agreed with Stalin," Churchill declared flatly. "Our relations with Russia are much better than they have ever been. I mean to keep them that way."

He added, "I talked to your General Anders the other day, and he seems to entertain the hope that after the defeat of the Germans the Allies will then beat Russia."

"This is crazy! You cannot defeat the Russians! I beg of you to settle upon the Curzon line as a frontier. Suppose you do lose the support of some of the Poles? Think what you will gain in return. You will have a country. I will see to it that the British ambassador is sent to you. And there will be the ambassador from the United States—the greatest military power in the world."

I shook my head, and it infuriated him that I refused his compromise.

"Then I wash my hands of this," he stormed. "We are not going to wreck the peace of Europe. In your obstinacy you do not see what is at stake. It is not in friendship that we shall part. We shall tell the world how unreasonable you are. You wish to start a war in which twenty-five million lives will be lost!"

"You settled our fate at Teheran," I said.

"Poland was *saved* at Teheran," he shouted.

"I am not a person whose patriotism is diluted to the point where I would give away half my country," I answered.

Churchill shook his finger at me. "Unless you accept the frontier, you're out of business forever!" he cried. "The Russians will sweep through your country, and your people will be liquidated. You're on the verge of annihilation. We'll become sick and tired of you if you continue arguing."

Eden smoothed matters for a moment, but Churchill came back strongly.

"If you accept the Curzon line, the United States will take a great interest in the rehabilitation of Poland and may grant you a big loan, possibly without interest. We would help, too, but we shall be poor after this war. You are *bound* to accept the decision of the great Powers."

I reminded him of his gloriously worded speeches early in the war, speeches that decried the taking of territory by force, and I spoke of the better treatment the Allies were according such turncoat Axis enemies as Italy and Rumania. He dismissed this argument.

"You're no government," Churchill said. "You're a callous people who want to wreck Europe. I shall leave you to your own troubles. You have no sense of responsibility when you want to abandon your people at home. You are indifferent to their sufferings. You have only your miserable, petty, selfish interests in mind.

"I will now call on the other Poles. This Lublin government may function very well. It will be the government, that is certain. Your arguments are simply a criminal attempt to wreck agreement among the Allies by your 'Liberum Veto.' It is cowardice on your part!"

I resented everything he said and told him so.

"I'm not going to worry Marshal Stalin," he replied. "If you want to conquer Russia, we shall let you go your own way. You ought to be in a lunatic asylum! I don't know whether the British government will continue to recognize you. You hate the Russians. I know you hate them."

Eden again tried to smooth the troubled waters, but Churchill interrupted. In a calmer voice he promised me that if I accepted Russia's claim to that half of Poland which the Red Army seized in 1939 while an ally of Hitler, he, Churchill, would "personally guarantee" that what was left of Poland would be free of Russian interference. His British ambassador to Poland, he said, would see to that.

I was furious at the man and could not conceal it.

"Mr. Churchill," I said, "I once asked you for permission to parachute into Poland and rejoin the underground, which is at this very hour fighting the Germans. You refused to grant me that permission. Now I ask it again."

"Why?" he asked, surprised.

"Because I prefer to die, fighting for the independence of my country, than to be hanged later by the Russians in full view of your British ambassador!"

It hurt the old man—hurt him more than I wanted it to hurt, for he had been (and remains) my friend. He turned on his heel and walked out of the room. But after a few minutes he returned and put an arm around my shoulders—and we were both on the point of tears.

"I'm sorry," I told him after a while. Then I said that if Russia would consent to let us retain the oil and potash deposits and Lwów, I would urge my government to accept the remainder of the Curzon line demand. Churchill took this information to Stalin and without my knowledge urged Stalin to approve of me as Prime Minister of the new Polish government. Stalin rejected both proposals.

I asked to see Stalin alone before I left Moscow. I still hoped I might appeal to him to relent in his demands.

"Poles will bless your name forever if you make a generous gesture here and now," I told Stalin. "Even if we retain only the area around Lwów and Vilna, in addition to the promised lands in the west, we will be grateful."

"I cannot and will not do this," Stalin said.

I had long since found that it was useless to quote previous promises and pledges, so I quoted Lenin to him. Lenin had denounced the partition of Poland by czarist Russia. Stalin brushed this aside.

"Poland is fortunate that I am not asking for more. In 1914 we were much farther to the west," he said.

He reviewed his claim to the Ukrainians and White Russians who had lived in eastern Poland and said, quite calmly, that he had ordered the execution of

20,000 Ukrainians who had been collaborating with the Germans and later captured by the Red Army. "We have put another 200,000 Ukrainians in our own army. Everything is settled," he added contentedly.

I pleaded for Poland's future political independence and envisioned a happy day when a sovereign Poland would have enduring pacts with Russia, the United States, Great Britain, France, and Czechoslovakia.

He nodded, then said, "You must include Hungary in that group."

"Hungary?" I asked.

"Hungary," Stalin repeated. "It will change completely when we get there."

I asked him bluntly if he intended to make Poland a Communist state after the war. I reminded him that I was not and never would be a Communist and would always oppose its principles.

"No," Stalin said, "absolutely not. Communism does not fit the Poles. They are too individualistic, too nationalistic. Poland's future economy should be based on private enterprise. Poland will be a capitalistic state."

He saw my surprise.

"There is no middle system," he explained after a bit. "Capitalism can assume many forms, have many different controls. But what is not communism is capitalism."

"Will you order the Communist Party in Poland not to seek power through revolution after the war?" I asked him. "Will non-Communist parties be allowed to work without being branded as 'Fascists' and 'Reactionaries'?"

"I will order that," Stalin said. "Poland will not be disturbed by fratricidal fights. But there are certain people—both Left and Right—that we cannot allow in Polish politics."

"But Marshal," I protested, "one cannot dictate who will not be in public life—if the person's party is behind him."

Stalin looked at me as if I were indeed a lunatic and ended the conference.

The official announcement from Moscow the next day, released jointly by the Russians, the British, and the Americans, expressed an odd optimism:

. . . The unfolding of military plans agreed upon at Teheran was comprehensively reviewed in the light of recent events. A free and intimate exchange of views took place on many political questions of common interest. Important progress was made towards a solution of the Polish question, which was closely discussed between the Soviet and British governments. They held consultations both with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Polish Government, and with the President

of the National Council and Chairman of the Committee of National Liberation at Lublin.

These discussions have notably narrowed differences and dispelled misconceptions. Conversations are continuing on outstanding points.

I waited for Churchill's speech in the House of Commons with some trepidation in view of the tone of our heated talk in Moscow. It came on October 27, 1944:

. . . The most urgent and burning question was that of Poland, and here again I speak words of hope, and of hope reinforced by confidence.

In this sphere there are two crucial issues. The first is the question of the eastern frontier of Poland and the Curzon Line, as it is called, and the new territories to be added to Poland in the north and west. The second is the relation of the Polish Government with the Lublin National Liberation Committee.

On these two points we held a series of conferences with both parties. We saw them together and separately, and of course were in constant discussion with the heads of the Soviet Government. I had several long talks with Marshal Stalin. The Foreign Secretary was every day working on this and cognate matters with Molotov. Two or three times we all four met together with no one but the interpreters present.

I wish I could tell the House that we had reached a solution of these problems. It is certainly not for want of trying. I am quite sure, however, that we have got a great deal nearer to the solution of both.

I hope Mr. Mikolajczyk will soon return to Moscow, and it will be a great disappointment to all sincere friends of Poland if a good arrangement cannot be made which enables him to form a Polish Government on Polish soil—a Government recognized by all the Great Powers concerned and, indeed, by all those Governments of the United Nations which now recognize only the Polish Government in London.

Although I do not underrate the difficulties which remain, it is a comfort to feel that Britain and Soviet Russia and, I do not doubt, the United States, are all firmly agreed to the re-creation of a strong, free, independent sovereign Poland, loyal to the Allies and friendly to her great neighbor and liberator, Russia.

Speaking more particularly for His Majesty's Government, it is our constant aim that the Polish people, after their suffering and vicissitudes, shall find in Europe an abiding home and resting place which, though it may not entirely coincide with the prewar frontiers of Poland, will nevertheless be adequate for the needs of the Polish nation and will not be inferior in character and quality to what they had previously possessed.

These are critical days, and it would be a great pity if time were wasted in indecisions or protracted negotiations. If the Polish Government had taken the advice we tendered them at the beginning of this year, the additional complication pro-

duced by the formation of the Polish National Committee of Lublin would not have arisen, and any prolonged delay in the settlement can only have the effect of increasing the divisions between the Poles in Poland and also of hampering the common action which Poles, Russians, and the rest of the Allies are taking against Germany. Therefore, I hope no time will be lost in continuing these discussions and pressing them to an effective conclusion.

I could not bring myself to believe that Roosevelt was wholly familiar with the scope of demands on Poland by the Russians and my position in combating those pressures. Therefore, just before Churchill's speech in the House of Commons, I wired the President ²⁵ to remind him of his words about Lwów and the nearby areas of oil and potash.

I did not look for an early reply from the President. He was involved in his campaign for a fourth term. Besides hoping for the exertion of his great influence, I needed the additional time, too, to clarify for our underground the demands being made upon us and to attempt to revive our fading relations with Churchill. To Churchill I addressed a series of questions, relevant to the more pressing Polish problems.

Among others, I asked:

Does Britain favor advancing Poland's postwar western frontier as far as the Oder River, including Stettin?

Is Britain prepared to guarantee the independence and integrity of the new Poland, in a joint declaration with Russia, pending the establishment of UN guarantees?

The answers came from Sir Alexander Cadogan, then permanent Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs. They were sent to our Foreign Minister Romer, with whom Cadogan had earlier spoken along similar lines:

Foreign Office S.W.I.
2nd November 1944

Dear Monsieur Romer,

I duly reported to the Prime Minister the conversation which I had with Your Excellency and the Polish Ambassador on October 31st, in the course of which you put to me three questions for the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

The Prime Minister, after consultation with the Cabinet, has now directed me to give you the following replies.

You asked in the first place whether, even in the event of the United States Government finding themselves unable to agree to the changes in the Western frontier of Poland foreshadowed in the recent conversations in Moscow, His Majesty's Gov-

ernment would still advocate these changes at the Peace Settlement. The answer of His Majesty's Government to this question is the affirmative.

Secondly, you enquired whether His Majesty's Government were definitely in favour of advancing the Polish frontier up to the line of the Oder, to include the port of Stettin. The answer is that His Majesty's Government do consider that Poland should have the right to extend her territory to this extent.

Finally, you enquired whether His Majesty's Government would guarantee the independence and integrity of the new Poland. To this the answer is that His Majesty's Government are prepared to give such a guarantee jointly with the Soviet Government. If the United States Government could see their way to join also, that would plainly be of the greatest advantage, though His Majesty's Government would not make this a condition of their own guarantee in conjunction with that of the Soviet Government. This Anglo-Soviet guarantee would, in the view of His Majesty's Government, remain valid until effectively merged in the general guarantee which it is hoped may be afforded by the projected world organization.

With regard to what you said in regard to anticipated difficulties in the way of negotiations in Moscow for a reformation of the Polish Government, the Prime Minister observes that the success of these negotiations must depend on a solution of the frontier question. It is impossible to ignore the possibility that agreement might be reached on the frontier question and that it might nevertheless prove impossible to reach agreement on the other matter. That would of course be most unfortunate, but the Polish Government would be in a much better position if negotiations broke down on this point, on which they would have the support of His Majesty's Government and probably of the United States Government, than on the frontier question.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Cadogan

Having heard from Cadogan, I then inquired of the American State Department the position of the United States on the matters of the exact definition of our western frontier; the time at which these German lands would be given to Poland; the possibility of the Big Three uniting in a declaration guaranteeing Poland's postwar independence; and the possibility of a United States loan to rehabilitate the new Poland.

Ambassador Harriman brought me a letter from Roosevelt, after the latter's election, incorporating answers to both notes sent to Washington:

I have constantly in mind the problems you are facing in your endeavors to bring about an equitable and permanent solution of the Polish-Soviet difficulties and particularly the questions which you raised in your message of October 26.

While I would have preferred to postpone the entire question of this Government's attitude until the general postwar settlement in Europe, I fully realize your

urgent desire to receive some indication of the position of the United States Government with the least possible delay. Therefore I am giving below in broad outline the general position of this Government in the hope that it may be of some assistance to you in your difficult task.

The United States Government stand unequivocally for a strong, free and independent Polish State with the untrammelled right of the Polish people to order their internal existence as they see fit.

In regard to the future frontiers of Poland, if a mutual agreement on this subject, including the proposed compensation for Poland from Germany, is reached between the Polish, Soviet and British Governments, this Government would offer no objection. In so far as the United States guarantee of any specific frontiers is concerned I am sure you will understand that this Government, in accordance with its traditional policy, cannot give a guarantee for any specific frontiers.

If the Polish Government and people desire in connection with the new frontiers of the Polish State to bring about the transfer to and from the territory of Poland of national minorities, the United States Government will raise no objection and as far as practicable will facilitate such transfer.

The United States Government is prepared, subject to legislative authority, to assist in so far as practicable in the postwar economic reconstruction of the Polish State.

Very sincerely yours
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Harriman added that Roosevelt had ordered him to see Stalin once again, if the Polish government in London agreed, and attempt to save for us both Lwów and the oil and potash fields.

My government would not agree to use Harriman's good offices. It decided that if we accepted intervention only in the matter of Lwów and the potash and oil fields, we would thus automatically be countenancing all other aspects of the Curzon line.

By this time it was abundantly plain to me that my own usefulness as Prime Minister was ended.

On the one side, I was confronted with the heavy Russian demands, the accomplished facts, and the appalling reality of what was happening inside Poland. Thousands of Home Army men were being arrested and shipped into Russia. Villages were being burned by the Red Army. Citizens were being murdered and the land stripped of its industry. On the other side, I had to take into consideration the exact extent of the support we could thereafter expect from the British and Americans.

We were becoming increasingly isolated. The Big Three regarded us either

openly or privately as *saboteurs* of their unity because of our refusal to yield on all points. My own cabinet felt that what I had agreed to represented too much of a compromise, though I explained to them that they were on the verge of being cut off from the Polish people by the threatened recognition of the Lublin group by all major Powers.

"If we cannot find a solution to our problems," I said in one of my last meetings with the cabinet, "Poland will have no democratic representation at that grave hour when the war ends and peace negotiations begin."

My stand was the position of the minority. I resigned, on November 24, 1944.

I saw Churchill four days later and, as a private citizen, begged him to continue supporting the Polish nation and to give the newly re-formed Polish government his sympathetic attention. Above all, I urged him not to forget the Polish underground and its dire condition, nor the countless thousands of citizens of Warsaw now dying in the concentration camp at Pruszków.

"Don't worry," Churchill said, "I'll never forget Poland."

Chapter Eight

YALTA

The usurpers take over in Poland
Pledges and betrayals of Yalta
Safe conduct for underground leaders
The leaders disappear
Churchill is depressed



My successor, Tomasz Arciszewski, a vigorous old Socialist leader who knew Nazi tyranny firsthand (we had removed him by plane after he had lived for five years in occupied Warsaw), continued the Polish government's efforts to heal the breach with the Soviet. In his first speech as Prime Minister on December 27, 1944, he extended his hand in friendship. It remained unclasped.

Russia's plans for a Soviet Poland were progressing rapidly without the consent of, or because of the indifference of, the United States and Great Britain. The Red activities were massive and coordinated. The Red Army remained just outside Warsaw (though other units of the Russian forces had long since by-passed the capital) until the Germans had completed the demolition of the city. On December 31, 1944, the Lublin Committee was instructed by the Kremlin to proclaim itself the Provisional Government of Liberated Democratic Poland. On January 5, 1945, Russia formally recognized the Provisional Government. On January 13, the Red Army High Command announced that it was beginning an "all-out" offensive against Warsaw, and on the seventeenth the Red forces entered the abandoned, flattened capital. It was all grimly efficient.

The proclamation that a new Polish government existed was issued by a group of Poles—generally unknown to the Polish people—that had banded together, with Russian support, into something called the “National Council of Poland.” It was another way of saying “People’s Soviet of Poland,” but its Russian masters were tactful enough not to give it its proper translation.

Boleslaw Bierut, conducting the National Council formation meeting at Lublin, made the requisite motion for the proclamation and then announced that he had appointed Osóbka-Morawski the first Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Others arbitrarily appointed were Władysław Gomułka and Stanisław Janusz, Deputy Prime Ministers; General Żymieński, National Defense and Commander in Chief; Józef Maślanka, Home Affairs; Stanisław Radkiewicz, Public Security; Konstanty Dąbrowski, Finance; Edmund Zalewski, Justice; Edward Bertold, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; Wictor Trojanowski, Labor and Public Works; and Stefan Matuszewski, Information.

Prime Minister Arciszewski issued a protest in the name of the Polish government in London. He took note of the fact that freedom of speech, press, and assembly was absent from Polish territory controlled by the Russians. The new Provisional Government, he asserted, was the product of “lawlessness” on the part of the Lublin Committee.

On the following day, January 1, 1945, Arciszewski made a broadcast to our bewildered country. He calmly set forth the fact that the Polish government in London was the only body constitutionally entitled to speak for the sovereign Polish state. The job of his government, he said, was to recover Polish freedom and to continue the efforts to reach an understanding with Russia.

The Lublin Committee and its Russian masters ignored Arciszewski’s broadcast. It also ignored my statement of the following day in behalf of the Polish Peasant Party.

The masquerade of the Lublinites, I said, would deceive no one. Nevertheless, the Lublin Committee had succeeded in usurping the privileges of a government. Externally, this usurpation could produce a change in the political situation if it were recognized by the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States.

The recognition of this “government” by the Soviet Union before the next meeting of the representatives of the three major Allied Powers would mean the adoption of a policy of *faits accomplis*, which would testify to a serious lack of agreement among the Allied nations, I said. But if Great Britain, the United States, and France

added their recognition of this government, it would signify the agreement of these countries to the establishment of a Communist Poland . . . a Poland whose independence, freedom, and strength will have been obliterated with the consent of these Powers.

Secretary of State Stettinius promptly announced that the United States would continue to recognize the London Polish government. The British Foreign Office referred the Polish government to "recent speeches" by Churchill in stating the official attitude of His Majesty's Government. The Red Army at Lublin saluted the formation of the Red Polish government with 12 salvos from 124 guns. The Beneš Czechoslovakian government in London recognized the Lublin group on January 31.

Stalin, with both a political and a military coup under his belt, now received Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta for what turned out to be the final meeting of three of the most powerful individuals in history.

The Big Three drew up final military plans for the defeat and future of Germany, and on February 12, 1945, issued a Declaration on liberated Europe. They announced they would "jointly assist the people in any European liberated state" to establish peace, form interim governments, and provide for free elections. They even offered to "facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections." I quote the pertinent portion of the Big Three statement relating to Poland.

We came to the Crimea Conference resolved to settle our differences about Poland. We discussed fully all aspects of the question. We reaffirmed our common desire to see established a strong, free, independent, and democratic Poland. As a result of our discussion we have agreed on the conditions in which a new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity may be formed in such a manner as to command recognition by the three major Powers. The agreement reached is as follows:

A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of Western Poland. The Provisional Government now functioning in Poland should, therefore, be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. Mr. Molotov, Mr. Harriman, and Sir A. Clark Kerr are authorized as a Commission to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland

and from abroad, with a view to the reorganization of the present Government along the above lines. This Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and the secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.

When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the Government of the U.S.S.R., which now maintains diplomatic relations with the present Provisional Government of Poland, and the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States, will establish diplomatic relations with the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, and will exchange Ambassadors by whose reports the respective Governments will be kept informed about the situation in Poland.

The three heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line, with digressions from it in some regions of 5-8 kilometers in favor of Poland. They recognize that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the north and west. They feel that the opinion of the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity should be sought in due course on the extent of these accessions, and that the final delimitations of the western frontier of Poland should thereafter await the Peace Conference.

The misgivings of the London government were immediate and understandable in view of the fact that on February 11, 1945, the day before the issuance of these pledges from the Crimea, the Kiev radio station broadcast certain excerpts from a letter of the "Mayor of Warsaw," Colonel Marian Spychalski, to Khrushchev, chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars. The letter said: "The traitors Sosnkowski, Raczkiewicz, Arciszewski, Mikolajczyk, and the capitulating Bór-Komorowski will receive the punishment they deserve. We will deal with them as you deal with the Ukrainian nationalists, Hitler's mercenaries."

Before the Big Three gathered in Yalta, the Polish government in London sent a memorandum to the great Powers. The memorandum³⁶ suggested that Polish territorial changes should be settled only after the termination of hostilities. It also expressed an ill-founded confidence that no puppet government would be recognized and said the Polish government could not be expected to recognize decisions unilaterally arrived at.

The memorandum was ignored. On February 13, 1945, the government rejected Yalta's plans for postwar Poland.

The decisions of the Three Powers in respect to Poland were taken not only without the participation and authorization of the Polish government but also

without its knowledge, Arciszewski pointed out. He repeated our earlier expressed intention to cooperate in the creation of a government in Poland "truly representative of the will of the Polish nation." This, too, was ignored, and on the same day James F. Byrnes, then director of the United States Office of War Mobilization and a party to the Crimea decisions as advisor to Roosevelt, said:

"There has not been any final determination of the lower part of the Curzon line. The Russians have very strong arguments for their point of view in that area. The question of who gets Lwów has not been finally decided."

He continued by saying that the language used in the conference statement should be encouraging to those who support the Polish government in London. "Instead of recognizing Lublin, *a new government will be formed*," he said. "This Government will be neither the Lublin nor the London groups. It must be remembered that the Russians liberated Poland. The Russian position is that they do not want behind the Soviet armies any Government that they cannot trust. The Russians cannot be looking back while they are going forward to Berlin."

In London we could not find the Yalta language "encouraging." On January 6, a month before the conference, Roosevelt had said, "We and our Allies have declared that it is our purpose to respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live and to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."

"But," he added, "with internal dissensions, with many citizens of liberated countries still prisoners of war or forced to labor in Germany, it is difficult to guess the kind of self-government the people really want. During the interim period until conditions permit a genuine expression of the people's will, we and our Allies have a duty to use our influence to the end that no temporary or provisional authorities in the liberated countries block the eventual exercise of the people's right freely to choose the government and institutions under which, as free men, they are to live."

So much for that, for what later was announced at Yalta, and for what happened still later in Poland. Along the same lines, Churchill said on January 18, 1945, a fortnight before Yalta, "We have one principle about liberated countries or the repentant satellite countries which we strive for, according to the best of our abilities and resources. Here is the principle. I will state it in the most familiar terms: government of the people, by the people, for the people, set up on

a basis of free and universal suffrage; elections with secrecy of ballots and no intimidation."

Churchill won the approval of the House of Commons with his interpretation of the Crimea decision, in a three-day debate at the end of February. Concerning Poland and the territory that he had been instrumental in yielding to Russia, he said, "It is not because I bowed to force." He spoke of the "happy" days that lay ahead for Poland and added:

"The impression I brought back from the Crimea is that Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honorable friendship and equality with the western democracies."

Only thirty members of Parliament expressed disapproval by abstaining from endorsing the Yalta decision on Poland. H. G. Strauss, a Conservative, offered as a protest his resignation as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

Before a joint session of Congress Roosevelt said the Big Three had reached "the most hopeful agreement that was possible." He added, "A strong, independent and prosperous Polish nation—that's the thing we must always remember—those words agreed to by Russia, Britain and me."

Molotov had another interpretation of what had taken place at Yalta. In a statement issued in Moscow on February 12, he said:

"This [the liberation of Poland] calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of the western part of Poland.

"The Provisional Government *which is now functioning in Poland* should, therefore, be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity."

At the beginning of March, 1945, leaders of the Polish underground were approached by ranking Red Army officers and offered transportation to Moscow to engage in the molding of political forces called for by the terms of Yalta. They were promised "on the word of honor" of a Red general that they would have safe conduct in Russia and thereafter would be permitted to fly to London for talks with London Poles and thence return home.

On March 27, Vice-premier Jan Jankowski, speaker of the underground parliament Kazimierz Pużak, and Colonel Leopold Okulicki, who had suc-

ceeded Bór-Komorowski as commander of the now dissolved Home Army, met Colonel General Ivanov in the suburbs of Warsaw. They did not return from the meeting. On the following day, thirteen more Polish leaders, including the chairmen of the four major parties represented in the underground, journeyed to the same meeting place. They, too, did not return. On March 31, in Poland, the veteran Wincenty Witos, President of the Peasant Party, was suddenly arrested in his home village of Wierzchoslawice. Though he was very ill at the time, he was taken from his home, put in a prison 250 miles away, and detained for five days and nights by the NKVD and Lublinites. He never fully recovered from the ordeal.

From London we announced to the world on April 6 that Soviet promises of safe conduct had been broken; that the sixteen leaders had been arrested and had disappeared. It was not until May 4 at San Francisco that Russia, through Molotov, admitted that it was holding the men. TASS explained the following day that the leaders were guilty of "diversionary tactics in the rear of the Red Army" and were awaiting trial.

The Yalta provisions, calling for participation by all Polish political factions in the proceedings leading to the erection of the Provisional Government of National Unity, were thus boldly violated by Russia. From San Francisco, where the first meeting was taking place, it was announced:

Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius expressed their grave concern to M. Molotov at receiving this most disquieting information after so long a delay, and asked him to obtain a full explanation concerning the arrests of these Polish leaders, a full list of their names, and news of their present whereabouts. The Foreign Secretary has reported this most serious development to His Majesty's Government and has informed M. Molotov that meanwhile he cannot continue discussions on the Polish issue.

A few days later at a press conference in San Francisco Eden said, "I must emphasize that the list of sixteen Poles reported as having disappeared and about whom we inquired of the Soviet government more than a month ago included nearly all the leading figures of the Polish underground movement.

"These men maintained an excellent record of resistance against the Germans throughout the war. . . . Most of them were just the type who should, in our view, have been consulted about the new National Government in Poland." He added that three of the arrested leaders—Kazimierz Bagiński,

Jozef Chaciński and Franciszek Urbański—had been submitted by the British government to the Commission of Three as entitled to be consulted.

But little came of this Anglo-American indignation, and in the period between the disappearance of the sixteen leaders and the revelation of their plight on April 22, 1945, Stalin and Bierut signed a treaty of friendship, mutual assistance, and postwar cooperation. This was a case of a Russian leader making a treaty with a Russian citizen who was posing as a Pole. And the treaty was signed after the Russian and the fake Pole had first removed the genuine representatives of Poland. It was in direct contradiction of the Yalta pact on which the ink was hardly dry. Stalin hailed the eight-article treaty in the following speech:

"I believe that the treaty we have just signed has a great historic importance. It marks a radical turning point in the relations between the Soviet Union and Poland towards the alliance and friendship which was forged in the course of the present war of liberation, and which now receives formal consolidation in this treaty.

". . . It is therefore not surprising that the peoples of our countries feel that this treaty represents a guarantee of the independence of the new democratic Poland, as well as of its power and prosperity. But this is not all. The present treaty has also a great international significance. Now our countries can no longer be opposed to one another. We now have a united front between our two countries from the Baltic to the Carpathians against the common enemy, German imperialism."

The efforts of Harriman and Clark Kerr to carry out their duties within the Committee of Three—duties imposed upon them by the Yalta terms—had been systematically spiked by Molotov before the latter's departure for San Francisco. As they attempted to carry on, I became the chief bone of contention in fruitless sessions in Moscow. The American and British members of the Committee insisted that I must be among those invited for the discussions. In a determined effort to keep me away as completely as he had managed to avert the attendance of the Polish underground leaders by arresting them, Stalin wired Churchill that I—and Poles who felt as I did—were "*saboteurs* of the Allied cause." Churchill showed me the wire on April 15 at Chequers.

He urged me to make a statement, preferably a conciliatory one, which would enable the British and Americans to insist that the work of the Three

Ambassadors continue. A statement, he added, would also give me the opportunity to deny the charges of political sabotage lodged against me and my friends.

With some misgivings I then stated publicly:

"I believe that a close and lasting friendship with Russia should form the cornerstone of future Polish policy and should be included within the framework of a broader amity with the United Nations.

"To remove all doubts as to my stand, I wish to state that I accept the Crimean decisions with regard to the future of Poland, her sovereign and independent position, as well as the formation of a representative Provisional Government of National Unity.

"I support the decisions made at Crimea with respect to the convocation of leading figures with a view to forming a Government of National Unity, which might represent the Polish nation as broadly and as truly as possible and which might be recognized by the Big Three."

After the unfortunate death of Roosevelt, President Harry S. Truman, in an effort to force Russia to live up to its Yalta pledges, dispatched Harry L. Hopkins to Moscow. Hopkins indeed broke the deadlock within the Committee of Three, but, as we learned later, only by bowing to Russian pressure. Stalin consented to go forward with the formation of the Provisional Government of National Unity only on condition that his Lublin Poles would thoroughly dominate it. He ruled that one of the three Poles invited to attend from London must be a Lublin Pole and that "three or four" of the five invited from Poland itself be sympathetic to the old Lublin Committee. Finally it was announced that the delegation from London might include myself, Professor Stanisław Grabski or Jan Stańczyk, and the strongly pro-Communist Julian Żakowski. From Poland itself would come either Cardinal Sapieha or Wincenty Witos; Professor Stanisław Kutrzeba of the University of Cracow, an independent; Zygmunt Żuławski, a Socialist; and two pro-Communists, Professor Adam Krzyżanowski and Dr. Henryk Kołodziejski. The Provisional Government would be represented by Communists Bolesław Bierut, Edward Osóbko-Morawski, Władysław Kowalski and Władysław Gomułka.

Hopkins promptly reported to President Truman that this line-up, lopsided as it was, fulfilled the Yalta provisions and urged Truman's support, which came forthwith.

I protested as follows: Two major Polish political parties, the Christian

Labor Party and National Party, had been ignored; I asked that the sixteen underground leaders be released in order that some of them could take part in the impending discussions; insisted that non-Communist delegates be protected from arrest if the discussions collapsed; that we also be permitted to meet among ourselves beforehand; and that the invitations, when forthcoming, be presented by the Big Three and not by the Provisional Government.

Hopkins asked Stalin to release the sixteen underground leaders and was given an evasive answer, which he did not pursue. In London the American Embassy informed me that the list—as decided in Moscow—could not be expanded to include other independents and democratic leaders.

My invitation, which came to me in London on June 12, 1945, was from the Foreign Office:

Sir:

I am directed by Mr. Winston Churchill to inform you that the Moscow Commission of Three on Poland, at a meeting on the 11th June, decided to address to you an invitation in the following terms:

"The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., Mr. V. M. Molotov, the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, and Ambassador of the United States, Mr. W. A. Harriman, authorized by the Three Allied Powers to consult with members of the Provisional Polish Government and other democratic leaders in Poland and abroad about the re-organization of the Provisional Polish Government on a broad democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad and about the formation of a Provisional Polish Government of National Unity, desire to have a meeting with you regarding the above-mentioned question and request you to arrive in Moscow on June 15th of this year."

I am to enquire whether the Commission may be informed that you accept this invitation.

Should you accept, arrangements will be made for your transport by British aircraft to enable you to reach Moscow by the 15th June.

I am, Sir

Your obedient servant

C. P. A. Warner

I replied to the Foreign Office that the language of the invitation recognized the existence, in fact, of the falsely contrived Provisional Government and that the letter and even the spirit of Yalta had been thus abused. This the Foreign Office denied.

Churchill attempted to expand the democratic aspect of the coming dis-

cussions by nominating the leader of the Christian Labor Party, Karol Popiel. His choice was refused.

Our hope of achieving much at Moscow, dim as that hope was, further faded on June 14 when, after it became apparent that Cardinal Sapieha would not be able to attend, it was learned that Witos also would be unavailable.

"I beg to inform you," Witos wrote the commission, "that notwithstanding my sincerest desire, I am not able to go to Moscow to take part in the deliberations on the question of the creation of a Polish Government of National Unity. The state of my health unfortunately has not improved, and with great regret I must refuse this honored invitation.

"I fully appreciate the historic significance of the deliberations, and I believe they will lead to successful, just, and consequently durable results in the interests of Poland and all peace-loving peoples."

In Witos's place we chose Dr. Władysław Kiernik, without knowing that his recent imprisonment by the NKVD had weakened his courage and independence.

Immediately after the delegates to the deliberations had been formally announced, Moscow revealed that the trials of the sixteen underground leaders had been set and would run simultaneously with our deliberations.

My own decision to attend was prompted by two meetings with Churchill at that period of negotiations. Both were illuminating. The first was held on June 9 at 10 Downing Street. I was pleasantly surprised as I entered his office. His charming wife was there, and she greeted me cordially. Mrs. Churchill had recently returned from a rather extensive trip to the USSR.

"I'm glad to see you back in England," I said. "After all, conditions are getting worse all the time, and even though you are the wife of a Prime Minister, you have no diplomatic immunity."

Mrs. Churchill laughed and then became quite serious.

"It was a revealing trip," she said. "I traveled mostly by train because Mr. Maisky warned me that Russian planes are not safe. I found Russia a country of great poverty and great endurance. It is a totalitarian country.

"Maisky has changed a great deal, probably because he doesn't want to share the fate of Litvinov. He is living in Moscow without any political power whatsoever and has become very anti-British. He said an odd thing to me. He asked me how we British could allow members of Parliament to persist in their criticism of Russia regarding its treatment of Poland. I answered, 'But you

know the Western World, Mr. Maisky. Why should you take such an attitude? You must know that as long as there is a Parliament and a Congress, there will be freedom of speech, however unpleasant to the government or governments concerned. That's why Western democracies work.'

"He said, 'Madame, you must have a headache from your travels. I suggest that you retire to your rooms and rest.'"

I found Churchill gloomier than ever before. He spoke almost immediately of the impending British elections.

"If I win, I will continue to serve," he said. "If I lose, I will withdraw from public life, I think, for as a private citizen I will have a freer hand, have more freedom of speech."

He knew of my extreme disappointment over the failure of the London Poles to reach an agreement with the Russian government.

"I think I have opened the door a bit," he said. "You should go to Moscow at once. Even if the outcome is not satisfactory, you should be a part of the future Polish government."

"I know the Lublin Poles have no support in Poland. The whole nation is against their government. You are the only Pole who commands the support of the Polish people."

"I'm very pessimistic," I said. "From my knowledge of what is taking place in Poland today I am certain that Russia intends to rule Poland by brute force. I am equally certain that Russia does not care for the outraged feelings of the Polish people at all."

"I'm more pessimistic than you are," Churchill said. "I'm pessimistic about the future of all of Europe, as well as Poland. Poland will be farther away from us than ever before because the Russians will come to the Elbe and perhaps to the Rhine and establish themselves between our two countries. They are already established in Yugoslavia. They won't agree with us about the future of Austria. Nobody knows where it will end."

"The democracies are fighting well," he went on morosely, "but when they stop fighting, they will want to go to bed and rest. They most certainly won't fight Russia, but what Russia will do—nobody knows. I'm sure of this much, however; the white cliffs of Dover will be able to resist every Russian attack. But nobody can foretell the future of Europe."

"Look at Tito, planted in Yugoslavia. But at least our armies are close by. They are at least near Czechoslovakia. They cannot be near Poland."

"I think Stalin would like to see the Polish case settled as was the Yugoslav case, with 50 per cent of his own men in the government. Who knows? Maybe you'll get better conditions for Poland. Maybe.

"The Germans are finished, but a new power has arisen in Europe—Russia. They'll never retreat, except in the face of war. But the democracies don't want war, so there will be no war."

I asked him what he believed would become of the Polish Army.

"You know the Russians," he shrugged. "They'll send those gallant forces to Siberia." The thought angered him, and his voice held all the old Churchillian vigor when he continued, "The next time I see Stalin, I'm going to tell him I don't believe anything he says!"

Then he calmed a bit. "I'm not anti-Russian," he said. "I'm for freedom. If Russia were for freedom, I'd be pro-Russian. If it persists in being against freedom, I'll always be anti-Russian."

My second and final meeting with Churchill came a day or two before my departure for Moscow. Again, I found him depressed.

"I think you should use this last opportunity to get not only your foot but your leg in the door," he said. "I hope you reach an agreement that satisfies you. Above all, you must go. You can count now on the support and influence of both the British and Americans."

I told him that my appetite for going had been completely killed by the announcement of the pending trials of the sixteen patriots. "Stalin did this on purpose," I told him. "It's plain that he doesn't want an agreement."

Churchill nodded his assent but went on, "We're now in a better position to deal with him. He wants to get into the war against the Japanese because he has an eye trained on the Far East. That's why he—and not we—asked for the meeting of the Big Three that will be held in Berlin in July. We're in a good position there. We don't care whether he comes into the war against the Japanese or not. We don't need him now.

"So go, for the sake of Poland. The Lublin Poles have no real authority among the Polish people. They need you."

"All they need is the Red Army and the NKVD," I said.

"And don't worry about the effect of the trials in Moscow," he continued. "We in the west never abide by the findings of Russian justice. We know the trials will be a mockery, and we'll ignore their findings. We remain the

friends of Poland . . . your kind of Poland. No matter who wins in the British elections, Britain will remain faithful to the real Poland.

"If you back out now," he continued, "I'll wash my hands of the whole Polish case."

There were other reasons why I agreed to take part in the Moscow discussions. Inside Poland the Russians were continuing their depredations against the Home Army. Already 40,000 of its members had been seized and deported to Russia. Russia was dismantling and shipping to the USSR a great number of entire Polish factories. It was ruthlessly looting, burning the homes and villages of those who refused to bow to Red rule, and confiscating the private property of persons flimsily accused of wrongdoing. More than 150,000 members of the Peasant Party Battalion alone were in extreme danger of being annihilated or sent into Siberia. So were 50,000 additional Home Army men who had revealed themselves to the Russians while in the process of obeying the "Tempest" order. About 5,000,000 Poles living in that section of the country granted to Russia by Yalta must be removed to safety, or they, too, faced arrest and deportation for slave labor. I felt that even if we were forced to yield territory, we must not be forced either to abandon these people to their fate or cease our efforts to secure for the rest of the country the political freedom it deserved.

Poland, I reasoned, had become a nation without boundaries. Most of its responsible political leaders had been arrested and removed. The Lublin government was announcing that it would soon hold elections, making an accomplished fact out of something that was not in its province.

Above all, there had been repeated appeals to me from inside Poland to return to the country. I felt it my duty, as one who had sent Polish soldiers into battle, to share the fate of my own people in those most difficult days. I knew, too, of the impending Potsdam conference, and convinced that the Lublin Committee would agree to anything Russia proposed at that session, I wanted to make my independent voice heard at Potsdam.

Poland's future had been decided at Teheran and Yalta without representation by the Polish government. Poland had not been invited to the San Francisco conference. Czechoslovakia and France had appointed "delegates" to the Lublin government, Western public opinion had been wrongly shaped in such a manner that it was generally agreed that London Poles, many of

them having been away from home for six years, no longer understood Polish domestic problems and preferred to dissent in order to remain in the comparative luxury of England.

There was the danger, too, that if independent Polish leaders did not participate in the work of the three Ambassadors, the Polish people, and not the Big Three, would later be blamed for the failure of Yalta.

Before leaving for Moscow, I received two somber warnings.

One was contained in a British weekly unfriendly to me. It suggested editorially that I would probably be arrested as soon as I set foot on Soviet soil because I had established "a secret wireless station in Great Britain, which had ordered Poles to murder Red Army troops in Poland."

The other warning was more direct and certainly more authoritative. It came from a Polish Communist who had close contact with the Russian Embassy in London.

"You know, Mikolajczyk," he said with elaborate unconcern, "you might have an airplane accident on the way to Moscow or even be killed in a traffic accident after you get there. I'd suggest that you remain here."

I left June 16, 1945.

Chapter Nine

REVERIE

I fly over Poland

The stricken land below . . .

Exhausted, bewildered, abandoned



STAŃCZYK and I flew in silence to Moscow, our minds crowded with memories. I cannot vouch for what he was thinking, for he was to undergo a violent change in the next few days. But I did know what was in my own mind, especially as the RAF plane soared over ruined Berlin.

I thought of the days in America in the summer of 1941 and the skepticism that had greeted my prediction that some day Berlin would be bombed and the tentacles of nazism pulled in. But the flood of my memories as we flew nonstop over Poland was more compelling.

I looked down on the familiar land and what was left of the cities I had known, and this whole flight was an affront to all reason. I, who had been Prime Minister of my country, could not land there now. I must fly *over* my country and the countrymen I loved. I must fly to Russia and gain, in effect, its permission to return. There was meaning and symbolism in all this. It was as if Poland were a vast storm area, and we must circle it and call ahead to Russia for the right to land.

Poland below me was alone—as alone as it had been the day Germany attacked six years before. I thought of the rage of the civilized world when Hitler demanded a corridor to Danzig; and I compared it with the complacency of the same world as a new dictatorial force, Russia, took not Danzig or a corridor but half of the entire country, not as a strident aggressor but as

an Ally whose seizure was condoned by other Allies. What, I asked myself, was the essential difference between Hitler and Stalin? I could find none.

I summarized the woes of Poland in those past six years and found the aggregate appalling. In that section of Poland which Hitler had incorporated into the Third Reich there had been public executions of officials and of peoples; churches closed; priests murdered; all private property confiscated; the speaking of the very language held a crime; vast numbers of citizens flung into slavery in Germany; Polish youths plunged into the *Todt* organization and—at gunpoint—into the German Army.

In the remaining section under Nazi control—the General Government—all high schools were closed; those who attended universities were murdered; all valuable art, books, and monuments destroyed; all culture crushed into the ground. Death, terror, and starvation were made the rule—day and night. Here, as in the incorporated area, there was a network of concentration and torture camps in which millions of Poles were murdered. As early as 1942 I had sent photographic evidence of the dead stacked like cordwood to the British and American press. They would not print the pictures. They could not believe them until their own men pressed into Dachau and Belsen.

And what about the Russian zone of Poland, incorporated into the USSR by a spurious plebiscite, 1,500,000 of its people herded into slavery in Russia, so many of them to meet death from starvation and disease? And Katyń?

I thought too of the glories of Poland's rebuttal and the desolate rewards. Our underground was one of the biggest and best organized in history with its own parliament, its cabinet, its Home Army that at peak strength numbered 300,000 men and women, its courts of justice, its schools from kindergarten to university, its ceaseless harassment of the German invaders, its welfare work—so much of which was the hiding, feeding, clothing, and smuggling out of the country the horribly oppressed Jewish population; and its clandestine newspapers, actually 300 of them, each copy the death warrant of its subscriber.

I thought, too, of the underground's agencies set up in other countries where Poles lived or were imprisoned or moved, especially in France where we had worked so closely with the *maquis* and were able to sabotage so many V-2 launching inclines. (We had delivered to the British—months before the first V-2 fell on London—complete specifications of the monstrous weapon that the Germans had tested experimentally on Polish territory.)

And the leaders of our brave, clandestine force. Great men. Ranks of them. The pioneers were long since dead—Rataj, Niedziałkowski, Dębski, Kwieciński . . . Ratajski, Pickalkiewicz, and General Rowcecki. But what of sixteen who lived to see peace and Russian arrest?

And our army in the France of 1940, where our First Division of Grenadiers lost 45 per cent of its men in the Maginot line . . . the way our men literally clawed their way out of invaded Poland to bear arms against the enemy on a dozen fronts: Libya, Tobruk, Cassino, Normandy, Arnhem.

Our navy . . . at Narvik, against the gargantuan Bismarck, at Dieppe and North Africa and along the Murmansk run. Forty per cent of our merchant marine went to the bottom to free the land over which I now flew.

Our air force . . . unlike anything ever seen in the skies, its grateful Allies said. Whole groups were wiped out to the last man. More than 1,200 German planes knocked out of the skies, 200 V-1's . . . and an incomparable record in the Battle of Britain.

Exclusive of the 1939 campaign and the underground activities, Poland lost 40,000 men in Allied uniform; 20,000 more were wounded; 6,000 others were made hopeless invalids; 17,000 were taken prisoner or are still "missing." But by the end of the war we who had been scattered to the four winds in the debacle of 1939 had over 200,000 men under arms.

Including the 1939 campaign and the underground activities, we suffered 800,000 casualties. Six million of our people . . . 6,000,000 human beings made in the image and likeness of God, including 3,200,000 Jews, were put to death in Poland in history's greatest outrage against a nation. Another 3,000,000 were deported into slavery, either to the west—where so many still wander as displaced persons whose souls are stamped "No Destination"—or to the east, where a cobelligerent that called itself an Ally made them serfs. In scenes of carnage and terror that made civilization reel, 28 per cent of our people were wiped out.

I thought, as we crossed over the eastern part of Poland this day, of "Tempest." I thought of the betrayal of Warsaw . . . the fine language of pledges long since ruptured . . . the loss of our lands in the east . . .

Poland lay below me, exhausted, bewildered, and—worst of all—abandoned. Its soul was broken. It looked as forlorn as it was, and there in the plane I heard myself repeating, "It's so unjust." A young RAF boy came down the aisle of the plane. "We land at Moscow at six-thirty," he said.

Chapter Ten

A "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY"

Compromises in the Kremlin

The governments merge

The underground leaders are hostages

No appeal



ON the first day of the deliberations among the Poles assembled in Moscow, June 17, 1945, those who no longer owed their allegiance to their homeland told the rest of us how dearly they were loved by the people of Poland. And when two Poles who knew the truth spoke up to dissent—Żuławski and Kutrzeba—the meeting was immediately adjourned.

On the next day I met with Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski. This was no time for the language of diplomacy.

"The democratic Poles cannot accept you as President of the National Council," I told Bierut, "for the simple reason that you—as a Communist—appointed the National Council, which in turn named you President. I offer these proposals: that Wincenty Witos, as leader of the largest political body in Poland [the Peasant Party] should be named president *ad interim*; and if that is not acceptable, then we should form a three-man board for this post, composed of Witos, Cardinal Sapieha, and yourself."

I waited. He did not explode. So I continued:

"What is more, we should fix now the date for the 'free and unfettered election' ordained by the terms of Yalta. In the meantime, the Peasant Party,

being the largest group, should have the post of Prime Minister in the Provisional Government, and independent leaders of other parties—since they represent a huge majority of the people—should have a majority of the seats in the cabinet.

"There should be immediate guarantees made about the freedom of independent parties, freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and freedom of the foreign press to report at will from our country. Important changes in the social and economic life of Poland should not be made until after the election—or if now, by unanimous vote of all members of the government that will be formed here. Self-government and freedom of religion must be guaranteed. Arrests must be stopped, an amnesty must be granted to Home Army forces who reasonably hesitate to reveal themselves, and our people should be repatriated from Soviet Russia. The Red Army should be asked to leave our country immediately, and Soviet generals and other officers commanding Polish Army forces should be told to resign and go home."

That was all Bierut would stand.

"There's no use for further conversation," he snapped. "I will report to the Commission of Three that there can never be an agreement between your faction and our group. I'm going home."

Kiernik arrived the following day from inside Poland with a program almost identical to the one I outlined to Bierut. It had been approved by Witos. Momentarily things brightened, but they dimmed on June 20 when one in whom we had placed much faith, Stańczyk, emerging from long sessions with key Lublin men, opened the day's proceedings with an attack on me. He urged the appointment of Osóbka-Morawski as Prime Minister "because Stalin likes him. We can't have a Prime Minister whom Stalin doesn't like or trust."

This exhortation won for Stańczyk the temporary post of Minister of Labor and Social Welfare. Later he was given a job in the United Nations.

Through the long morning that followed we could reach no agreement. Finally a subcommittee was formed, two-thirds of which was Communist or quasi-Communist. This subcommittee was authorized to draft an agreement by which the Provisional Government of National Unity might be guided until the elections.

The internal agreement had the following aims and principles:

ARTICLE I

All parties entering the Coalition have full freedom of organizational work, freedom of assembly, press and propaganda.

Important decisions are to be arrived at by means of an understanding, not by majority vote.

The basic foreign policy is friendship, cooperation and alliance with democratic states, especially with the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France and friendship with the U.S.A. At the same time it is based on a Slavonic and anti-German front, having especially in view an alliance with Czechoslovakia.

Poland will participate in an international organization for peace and security.

The Western border of Poland will be fixed as soon as possible.

Elections to the *Sejm* [Parliament] on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret ballot, will be made as soon as possible, possibly before the end of 1945.

An amnesty is declared for political prisoners, except national traitors who collaborated with the German invaders.

The Red Army, as well as all other civilian, party and security organs of foreign powers, will be evacuated.

ARTICLE II

The Peasant Party's participation in the Government should be at least one-third, its candidates to be designated by its competent authorities.

The National Council will be enlarged and the Peasant Party will participate in it in the ratio mentioned above.

Wincenty Witos will be First Vice President of the National Council and Prof. Stanislaw Grabski its Third Vice President.

Six members of the Peasant Party will hold Cabinet posts. The Peasant Party will provide a Vice Premier and Ministers of Public Administration, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Education, Post and Telegraphs, Culture and Arts, and Health,

The Presidency of the Supreme Chamber of State Control will be awarded to the Peasant Party.

The Peasant Party will present undersecretaries in Cabinet posts in the ratio of one-third.

The Peasant Party's participation in the diplomatic and consular service will be in a similar ratio.

The Peasant Party is entitled to the Presidency of the State Agricultural Bank and the Central Bank of Agricultural Co-operatives, and vice-Presidencies in the National Bank, Communal Bank, etc.

The Peasant Party is entitled to a correspondent share in the administration of the Central Co-operative Union *Spółem*, the Cooperative Auditing Union, and other State financial, economical and cultural institutions.

The Peasant Party will receive an allotment of paper for party publications.

The Peasant Party will take part in the Publication Co-operative "The Reader."

Simultaneously, it was decided to invite from London the chairman of the Christian Labor Party, Karol Popiel, to participate in state activities.

At the next meeting of the Commission of Three, which was held to consider this agreement, Molotov moved that it be accepted immediately. But Harriman and Clark Kerr demurred; they wanted a chance to consult their governments. Harriman said a bit wistfully, "I would like more stress placed on the holding of 'free and unfettered elections.'"

At one point in the high-pressuring of the British and American delegates, Bierut spoke at length in Russian. When he finished, I said to Clark Kerr, who was president, "Please let me have a translation of what this 'Pole' is saying."

Diplomatic recognition of the new Polish government quickly came from the Big Three. But the agreement itself was unsatisfactory. It brought additional disillusionment to a great majority of the Polish people. Yet the day was to come when we gladly would have settled for the rights outlined in that agreement. For in the end, the Peasant Party did not get even its one-third share. It got nothing.

Before we left Moscow to return to Poland, Stalin gave a handsome dinner at the Kremlin. It was a glittering affair that must have awakened the graves of bygone czars. The Russian officers on hand attended in spangled glory, the tables groaned with food, and vodka flowed like water.

Flushed and guttural, Stalin rose to his feet at the climax of the long night.

"There have been many misunderstandings between Poland and Russia," he said, "and much bloodshed. Both sides have made mistakes. But Russia is more responsible, for after all we are a big country. Poles twice took Moscow, and Russians have camped in Warsaw.

"Now we sit in friendship. But friendship, true friendship, can be achieved only when certain 'old people'—let us say—disappear from the horizon, and their suspicions are removed.

"Changes in Russia appeared when Russian imperialism disappeared, when the policy of trying to 'Russify' other countries was stopped, and when the new Russia was created by the pupils of Lenin. In Poland the sacrifices of the people during the German occupation have brought forth the possibility of

changes within Poland and created better grounds for understanding with Soviet Russia.

"But I know that in both countries—even here at this table—there are people who have doubts about the real intentions of Russia toward the Poles. These people should observe current events. Then they will find their suspicions have no basis.

"Poland is a big country now, backed by Soviet Russia and the Allies. But no country, even the biggest country in the world, can today feel secure with but a single alliance. The Germans can arise again, as they did after World War I, and assume great strength and military power. If this is the case, the Soviet-Polish alliance will not be sufficient. Thus, both nations must have alliances with the West . . . with Great Britain, France, and the United States." He picked up his glass. "I drink a toast to those Allies!"

Then he left his place at the table and approached the chair of General Karol Świerczewski, the "General Walter" of the Spanish Civil War and now a Russian general commanding the Polish Army. Stalin kissed him, and then they drank with their arms interlocked. After that Stalin proposed a toast to Wanda Wasilewska, around whom he had built the core of the Communist Lublin government. He referred to the woman, who now posed as a Polish patriot, as ". . . the most distinguished and best woman writer of the Soviet Union and a colonel of the Red Army."

On our last day in Moscow, I pleaded with Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski to go to Stalin and ask for the release of the Polish underground leaders who had already been sentenced and also for the release of those still on trial. They refused.

"It would make Stalin angry," Bierut said. "Besides, we don't need those people in Poland now."

I made one last effort to win pardons for them. I hoped that effort could be made personally to Stalin, but Molotov blocked the way.

"He is too busy to receive you, but I'll see that he learns of your plea," he promised.

"Please stress this," I urged. "The agreement has been signed. The people of Poland are awaiting the arrival of their new government. Don't you understand what a great psychological effect it would have on them if we could tell them upon our return that their underground leaders have been freed in the interests of increasing the friendship between Poland and Russia?"

I left, not without some hope. I sensed as I left that there could be no humiliation comparable to what we Poles had just undergone: the holding of the prison sentences of comrades over our heads while we were in the act of fashioning an agreement.

The Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court found twelve of the sixteen patriots guilty on all or part of the "charges" against them. There could be no appeal. Colonel Okulicki was sentenced to ten years; Jankowski, eight years; Bień and Jasiukowicz, five years; Pużak, eighteen months; Bagiński, one year; Zwierzyński, eight months; Czarnowski, six months; and Stypulkowski, Mierzwa, Chaciński, and Urbański, four months.

In the face of formidable odds, terror, grave danger, and lack of adequate means, these men had fought the Germans since 1939. The Russian court found them guilty in a trial for which there was no precedent in international law. To this decision there was, of course, no appeal.

Chapter Eleven

HOME

The Provisional Government reaches

Warsaw

My welcome from exile

My mother is alive

Maniac Gomułka

Potsdam bickering

Molotov grabs all



THE Provisional Government of National Unity flew to Warsaw in (appropriately enough) Russian transport planes on June 27, 1945.

We landed at Okęcie airport outside the capital. My heart swelled at the sight of countless thousands of Poles who had come to the airfield to see this curious mixture of utter strangers and old friends who were to govern them until that happy day when, under the terms of Yalta, they could elect men and women of their own choice in a free and unfettered election.

It was difficult to keep from weeping. For on those faces was the indescribable nobility of a people who remained unconquered in a conquered land, who remained free in bondage. I knew so many of them, and they called my

name and told me to speak to them. I moved toward the microphone that had been set up on the field. But as I approached it, filled with emotion, Bierut and the three NKVD men who guarded him stopped me.

"When you speak," Bierut hissed, "you must address these people at first by saying 'Obywatele'" [Citizens]. It is a salutation that is older even than "Comrades." I turned my back on him, took the microphone, and began, "My sisters and brothers."

I went on, "It is difficult to speak at this moment, when a long and difficult journey is completed. The path was thorny. It went through Hungary, France, England, Moscow, and now it finishes where it began.

"Every Pole would like to come home. I hope others will follow me here. We want to be with you—you who underwent so much—and hand in hand with you rebuild . . . heal the wounds . . . and live again in a truly free, independent, and sovereign Polish Republic."

We drove into the city. The sight of it made me mute. Warsaw was an eternity of rubble and waste. And the sweet, sick smell of the dead beneath the debris lay like an evil blanket on the ruins. Through streets lined with hopeful faces, the members of the new government were driven to the Praga section where we were to be housed and hold our meetings. A great congregation of Poles followed us—to the barbed wire that had been placed around our buildings.

Strange, stone-faced men in Polish Army uniforms guarded the entrance to the buildings. They spoke Russian as I passed them. I walked inside, trying to shake off my depression, and realized that the two men who had moved near me as I got off the plane were members of the Security Police. They would always be with me. I thought of the people outside the building and went to a balcony on the second floor to wave to them across that symbolic chasm of barbed wire.

The make-up of the Provisional Government of National Unity was announced the next morning, June 28, by Bierut: Edward Osóbka-Morawski, Prime Minister; Władysław Gomułka, First Deputy Premier; myself, Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform; Michał Rola-Żymierski, National Defense; Wincenty Rzymowski, Foreign Affairs; Władysław Kiernik, Public Administration; Stanisław Radkiewicz, Public Security; Konstanty Dąbrowski, Finance; Hilary Minc, Industry; Professor Michał Kaczorowski, Reconstruction; Dr. Jerzy Sztachelski, Supply and

Trade; Stefan Jędrzychowski, Shipping and Foreign Trade; Jan Rabanowski, Communications; Mieczysław Thugutt, Posts and Telegraph; Henryk Świątkowski, Justice; Jan Stańczyk, Labor and Social Welfare; Dr. Franciszek Litwin, Public Health; Czesław Wycech, Education; Władysław Kowalski, Culture and Arts; Stefan Matuszewski, Information; and Stanisław Tkaczów, Forestry.

Fourteen of the twenty-one were Lublin Poles. Two completely new cabinet posts had been arbitrarily added to the government—the posts of Jędrzychowski, Minister of Shipping and Foreign Trade, and Stanisław Tkaczów, Minister of Forestry. Both men were Communists. Tkaczów's authority appropriated most of my own as Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform. We protested in vain. The whittling down of our promised one-third of a voice in the government had begun.

On this second day at home I drove to Cracow and on to the village of the ailing president of the Polish Peasant Party, Mr. Witos. The village lay only 50 miles outside of Cracow, but the trip took many hours. The roads were jammed with Red Army troops returning from Germany and western Poland, carrying loot of such quantity and variety as to defy description. Many were drunk. Some had captured German automobiles and drove them crazily, often crashing. Some of the victors dragged or prodded along terrified and weeping Polish girls.

I found Witos sick and pessimistic. Three times Premier of Poland and one of democracy's great voices, he lived in poverty and continuing peril. In 1939 he was wounded by a German bomb, arrested, and taken to the Gestapo prison in Potsdam. He nearly died there, then was sent home, and placed under a Gestapo guard. He managed to escape his captors and reach the underground. We had made an effort to fly him out of Poland in 1944, but this special mission failed. Instead of finding contentment when peace came, he had been cruelly treated by the NKVD after his arrest. He apologized for the fare he had to offer me. "My remaining chickens were stolen last night by our guests—the Reds—who are bringing us freedom and culture," the old gentleman sighed.

I reported the results of the Moscow meetings to him and gave him an account of the mockery of a trial that had sentenced his underground friends.

"I am not long in this life," Witos said. "But if you live, you must work night and day to build up a strong Peasant Party . . . one strong enough to

defend Poland against injustice, chaos, and the robbery that is taking place." I pledged that I would.

Back in Cracow the next day a Polish Communist general came to my hotel at noon and told me that a great crowd had gathered in the old market place—where Kościuszko himself had once spoken in behalf of Polish freedom and where, much later, Nazi Governor General Frank had cursed the "stupidity" of Polish resistance. I went immediately and spoke.

The general, as he called himself, and I left the market place in the same small car. But the crowd pressed against it, and we barely inched along, while women, haggard and drawn, walked beside it and shouted to me that the man sitting next to me had imprisoned their husbands, sons, brothers.

And then, in a moment I can never forget, these starved but hopeful people—men and women—lifted the entire car on their backs and carried it a bit. In the confusion a woman was thrown to the street and wounded. I jumped out to comfort her, but she would not be taken to a hospital.

"What does it matter?" she cried. "You're back! We can live again! Now we have something to live for!"

Others in the crowd swarmed around the general. He might have been killed then and there if I had not intervened. The mob picked me up on its shoulders and carried me through the streets for a long time, singing the old Polish songs of freedom at the top of its lungs. Then an ominous silence settled over the crowd as we turned a corner. Standing in the street was a knot of Red Army officers, drunk and belligerent. The people carried me abreast of them, and I sensed from the deep-throated rumbling behind me that my followers were in a mood to pounce on the officers, heavily armed as they were.

A Russian colonel among them sensed the danger, too, for suddenly he lifted his voice and held out his hand to me.

"How are you, *Tovarisch*?" he asked nervously.

"How are *you*?" I returned, and the tension behind me subsided.

The increasingly pathetic efforts of the Polish Peasant Party to avert the growing catastrophe overtaking "liberated" Poland began the following day at a meeting of party leaders of the Cracow area. When I stepped out of the meeting place that night, the street was bare and ghostly. Not a living thing stirred.

I thought it odd, but I stepped into my car (unaware that all others at the meeting were at that moment being silently placed under arrest) and started away.

Then I knew there was indeed life in that street. Flaming bursts of machine-gun fire began sweeping over my head, and in the light from the guns I could see Red Army troops and Polish Security Police standing with their backs against the walls of the buildings, as far as the eye could see.

I drove down that 600-yard street with the shots streaking just over my head. The men had their instructions. This canopy of fire was simply a warning not to carry out our intentions to start independent political activities. The people had shown that they saw in me a reason to believe in the pledges made to them. This was for me the beginning of a death sentence that was not quite carried out.

Immediately after reaching the comparative safety of my Cracow hotel I protested by phone to the governor of the province.

"I can do nothing," he answered, uneasily. "There is nothing anyone can do about the Security Police."

The next day, at the first meeting of the new government, I let Bierut and the others know I was aware of the significance of the gunplay.

"I see you have given me a warning," I said, "but if you think you can frighten me, you're mistaken. I've been warned before. I knew what I was letting myself in for when I returned. I want you to know I'm prepared for anything."

The enormity of the task ahead lay heavily on me. The democratic forces needed the help of America and Great Britain, but those two countries—parties to the making of the rules under which we were supposed to live—had passed along to other matters, relieved to be done with the "Polish problem," as it had come to be known. The help we needed had to come from within our own country. We had to appeal to the conscience, if any, of our master; bring back into normal civilian life the independent Polish brains and brawn that had been scattered to the ends of the earth or were reluctant to reveal themselves in the homeland. With hopes for our own resourcefulness in mind I spoke in Theater Square in Warsaw on July 3 before more than fifty thousand of my countrymen.

"The creation of the Government of National Unity should strengthen the Polish case in international affairs," I said, thinking of the urgent need of

UNRRA aid and credits. "Perhaps some of you have wondered at the role of the Peasant Party in this new government. Let me say only that we of the Peasant Party in the interests of unity put aside our personal and party ambitions to become members of this coalition. The party retains what it has always fought for—belief in a free and independent form of life, independence and sovereignty for our country."

I knew it was senseless to beat our heads against the solid wall of the Kremlin, but I felt that I could use Stalin's own words to good effect by repeating him.

"How right Stalin was when he told me that Russia and Poland are not enough, that they must be allied to Great Britain, France, and the Slav nations, and live in friendship with the United States.

"We want to take an active part in the forging of the peace. And we can! When I landed in Warsaw, I was emotionally moved by the terrible destruction of the capital. But much more, I have been moved by the spirit of the people of Warsaw. Such people will never perish! They will build a new Warsaw, build a free Poland.

"We declare our loyalty to the Government of National Unity. We will cooperate loyally and expect the same in return. There must, indeed, be unity, or we cannot attain our goals. We lost much of our intelligentsia during the war—scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, writers, artists. Others who are still abroad will come back and work in, and for, Poland. I hope our soldiers who fought so courageously on all fronts will return, and I appeal here and now to those dauntless members of the underground who are still living in the forests to come out and become normal citizens again. Poland has lost too much blood. It now could not stand fratricidal strife."

My words were greeted with tremendous applause, and I say without vanity or spite that when Gomułka and Osóbka-Morawski spoke, there was hardly a sound except from their claque. The people did not know them nor trust them. In the demonstration that swirled around me after the speeches, Gomułka and Osóbka-Morawski were alone except for their NKVD guards, and they left angrily.

It was not until the next day that I was able to see my mother in Poznań. It was my first meeting with that brave old lady since I had joined my unit as a private in July, 1939. By what could only have been an act of Providence, she had survived the war and occupation unscathed.

In the same city on the same day I spoke in Freedom Square before another throng of more than fifty thousand. When I reached that part of my address where I urged the people to remain strong in order that we might earn the pledges of freedom extended to us at Yalta, a clique of Communists suddenly began to chant singsong cheers for Bierut. They were shouted down. Before that day had ended, a friend of mine brought me a Communist booklet, meant only for Communist eyes. My name leaped out of one of its pages.

"We must not let Mikolajczyk get too far out in front," it ordered. It was the beginning of an avalanche of literature against me and my party.

The machinery was set up on July 6, 1945, for the vast repatriation of Poles from the USSR (where hundreds of thousands had been forced to become Russian citizens), from the eastern half of Poland that had been seized by the Soviets, and for the transfer of Poles of Ukrainian descent into the USSR. Poles in Russia were given until November 1 of that year to file such applications to a board that called itself *"The Commission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on Consideration of Problems of Admission, Abandonment, and Deprivation of Soviet Citizenship."*

I began to look forward to the Potsdam meeting of the Big Three, for the troubles of my party and myself were increasing. Cabinet meetings were attended not only by an already overwhelming majority of Communists and by fellow travelers going under other names but by hosts of Communist undersecretaries. Instead of less than two dozen at such meetings, the number now grew to more than a hundred, and the supernumeraries took active roles. The Polish Peasant Party, though promised vice-ministers in the ratio of one-third, got one representative.

After such a travesty of democratic procedure I called on Gomulka in his office and told him that I planned to take this to the people unless it stopped immediately.

"Don't you go too far with the people," he roared in a gale of fury. "The people are already against us. They are crazy! You watch your step, or you'll be as sorry one of these days as they are."

It is interesting to study maniacs of this kind.

"You can't kill all of us, Gomulka," I said to him. "You can't exterminate a whole people or crush its determination to be independent. You know you can't win. Poles are essentially anti-Communistic. It is barely possible that

over a long period of time you might win them to your way of thinking, if that way of thinking included even an elementary kindness. But, by God, you'll never *beat* communism into us!"

He leaped from his chair and charged me, his hand on the revolver in his pocket and the outline of his gun pointed at my chest. I sat there for there was nothing else to do, while he stood over me, twitching and speechless with rage.

"Give me a cigarette, please," I asked.

Gomułka wheeled away from me and paced the office for a time.

"We'll get the people," he swore. "And we'll get you, too."

The Polish underground formally disbanded at the beginning of July, 1945, and issued a statement²⁷ that expressed the misgivings and hopes of the land. The statement reaffirmed the principles of the Atlantic Charter, spoke of the continuing spiritual struggle of the Polish people, and called for the banishment from Polish soil of the Russian Army and secret police. It also demanded freedom and democratic institutions for the Polish people.

Bierut, Foreign Minister Rzymowski, and I were chosen to express the Provisional Government's views on a variety of problems confronting the Big Three at their Potsdam meeting. Professor Grabski was permitted to submit his views in writing.

My position was extremely difficult. Acting directly on instructions from the Kremlin, Bierut and Rzymowski set out to alienate the paternal interest of President Truman, Churchill, and—after Churchill's defeat in the British general elections that came in the middle of the Big Three hearings—Prime Minister Attlee.

By word and deed, the two Polish Communists made demands for western territory, worded in a way calculated to stir the British and Americans to dissent. The double game was obvious: If the United States and Great Britain refused to grant Poland new western lands, the Bierut government would then be able to announce that the Yalta obligations were no longer valid. And Bierut's physical and spiritual leader, Stalin, could then say to the people of Poland, "Russia is your only friend. The United States and Britain agreed to take the eastern part of your country from you and now do not wish to abide by their promise to compensate you with land in the west."

The Communists had another thought in mind, too. The Red Army con-

trolled that part of Germany which had been promised to Poland. If Poland's demands were rejected, the land would remain under the custody of Russia as long as the period of occupation lasted.

I warned the Americans and British about the Communists' hidden intention and urged them to couple an agreement on the frontier demands with an insistence that the Provisional Government live up to its pledges concerning the freedom of Poland's people. My warning had to be made in private. When asked to appear before Molotov, Eden, and Byrnes for a more public expression of my views, I outlined the following stand:

I reminded the Three that the Nazi leaders had, even in the face of impending defeat, taken comfort in the fact that they had altered the economic life of Europe in the effort to bind it up with Germany's. An intelligent exchange of goods among Britain, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Scandinavian countries, I asserted, could overcome the chaos caused by the Germans. It would guard against the rise of new aggression in Germany and strengthen each country concerned.

The apportionment of land to Poland in the west would be a safeguard against the resurrection of Germany as a military aggressor, I pointed out. Germany was able to make war because it possessed the Ruhr and because that section of eastern Germany—now about to come to us—had supported war industries beyond the reach of Allied bombing.

The Germans, I continued, had practically supported their war of aggression by money wrung from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia for use of the waterways of the Oder and Elbe. I suggested that Poland now be given control of the waters of the proposed new western boundaries, that we control their gateway, Stettin, and make mutual agreements with those whose trade moved through these channels.

I pointed out that more than one and a half million Poles were living in these territories and in East Prussia. There had been a mass exodus of Germans from those areas in the prewar years, and the Reich had been forced frequently to seek Poles to work the land and man the industry of the territory. Consequently, much of this land had been cultivated and its value enhanced by Polish labor.

Also, and more importantly, we needed that land for the millions of Poles who would be moved out of the USSR and out of the eastern section of Poland. To dump these people into the already overcrowded central area of

what was left of Poland would create economic chaos, not only for them but for those already living there.

My last argument before the Big Three's foreign ministers was that even by the addition of these lands in the west, Poland would still be 22 per cent smaller than when it went to war against Germany. Germany, the aggressor, would be only 18 per cent smaller. Our prewar Poland had spanned 389,700 square kilometers. After the loss of the eastern and the addition of western lands Poland would possess 312,030 square kilometers—meaning that we would eventually lose 77,670 square kilometers.

Before my talk, the foreign ministers had announced that they planned to make no comment at that time. But when I was finished, Molotov spoke up, apparently still hopeful that the British and Americans might reject at least part of the proposition of compensation for Poland in the west.

He spoke briskly, in the manner of a man coming to the support of a friend who was being put upon by the other two parties concerned. He finished, "Poland is our closest friend among the nations. We must look out for her interests."

But Byrnes and Eden were ready for him.

"Poland has enjoyed a long friendship with the United States," Byrnes said, "and we are determined that this will continue."

Eden looked at Molotov for a time.

"You will perhaps remember that Britain went to war in 1939 in the interest of our Ally Poland," he said.

In the last days of the Big Three meeting I asked Truman and Attlee to agree to the western frontiers and to insist strongly that the Polish Provisional Government give definite pledges to fulfill Yalta's provision for a free and unfettered election. I appealed to them also to bring about conditions in Poland that would lend themselves to such an election.

Bevin had many conversations with Bierut and others in this matter. He was promised that the Provisional Government would give full recognition to political and religious freedoms. Bevin was assured that the election would be held "within a year, if not earlier."

The subsequent announcement of the Big Three ²⁸ gave the administration of the territory east of the Oder and the Western Neisse Rivers to the Polish state. It also took note that the Polish Provisional Government had agreed to an early holding of free and unfettered elections.

Another direct mention of Poland in the official Potsdam Declaration was contained in that section devoted to reparations from Germany. It read:

"The USSR undertakes to settle the reparation claims of Poland from its own share of reparations."

This was a blow to the economic independence of Poland, for it tacitly made a satellite of us in a field directly bearing on our rehabilitation. On the whole, however, Potsdam was of help to the Polish cause. After all, we had had our western frontiers more or less established; we had gained a home for the millions who would be moved from the east; the looting of the Red Army had been stopped in the new territory, which had been part of the Russian zone of occupation in Germany, and the area held the hope of new life.

The Potsdam Agreement also provided for the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Poland.

Back in Warsaw on August 2, 1945, the democratic forces of the Provisional Government won the proclamation of a general amnesty for the Home Army. What it lacked was the inclusion of leaders. The Communists knew full well that the rank and file, having faithfully followed their leaders through a vicious clandestine fight against the Germans, would be reluctant to accept an amnesty that did not include those men. The purpose of this split amnesty was to separate the leaders from the rank and file.

But the courageous officers of the Home Army ordered their followers to go out into the open and resume their places in Polish society. Because of this self-sacrificing act, which imperiled the lives of the officers who issued the orders, more than two hundred thousand members of the Home Army and Peasant Battalions became normal citizens again, and Poland was spared another bloodbath.

Members of the Provisional Government were summoned to Moscow by telephone in mid-August for consultations about our linked reparations. We learned upon our arrival at the Kremlin, however, that not only reparations would be discussed but also frontier matters. The reparations came first. Molotov informed us at the first meeting that our share of what Russia planned to extract from Germany was 15 per cent and that it would total approximately five hundred million dollars.

"Poland is luckier than the Soviet Union," he complained. "You get this amount in addition to the six billion dollars you've already received."

"What six billion?" I asked, startled.

"Don't you understand?" Molotov asked coldly. "Poland has given her eastern provinces to Russia. The Polish property left there totaled three and one-half billion dollars. But on the other hand you receive from Germany an area whose property is worth nine and one-half billion dollars. So it is clear that you've gained six billion dollars."

Before I could question his mathematics, he added, "As for the Soviet Union, we're asking the United States and Great Britain for only ten billion dollars of reparations from Germany. And they are raising objections!"

"Just a moment," I asked. "You say the property in the new western part of Poland is worth nine and a half billions. Don't you remember that you stripped it of its factories, railroads, plants, homes, livestock, and everything else you could transport to the USSR?"

Molotov scoffed at this. "Oh, that has amounted only to about five hundred millions," he said—and abruptly adjourned the meeting.

On the second night of our Moscow "trade talks," as the Russians called them, Bierut, Hilary Minc, Minister of Industry and Commerce, and the Deputy Foreign Minister Zygmunt Modzelewski agreed to give the USSR a 51 per cent share in the ownership and management of the properties we had acquired in the west, properties that Potsdam had ruled must be administered by the Polish government alone. Bierut and the others arrived back at our headquarters at 6 A.M., apparently pleased with the deal they had promised to make.

Prime Minister Osóbka-Morawski had not been invited to attend the session, and it made him quite indignant. He told me, however, what had taken place. I advised him to defend Poland against such pressures, and I showed him the wording of the Potsdam Agreement that plainly denied Russia the right to make such demands as the one of the night before.

When we gathered again the next day I found him, for once, a supporter. "I'll never agree to what you've done," I shouted at them, and Osóbka-Morawski backed me. As a result, Russia offered one of its rare counter-proposals.

In this counterproposal the Soviet Union demanded twelve million tons of Polish coal per year during the Red Army's occupation of Germany. That would mean most of our export-coal. At first, Molotov insisted that no charge be made for the coal. But after much argument it was agreed that Russia

would at least pay the bare cost of mining it, which was five or six dollars a ton.

After Osóbka-Morawski had officially signed the agreement he discovered, however, that Minc had permitted the Russians to insert a clause cutting payment to one dollar and twenty-five cents a ton. (We had already been offered twelve dollars a ton—later it was to be sixteen dollars—by Denmark and Sweden.) I stormed at the robbery, only to be accused by the Lublin group of trying to rupture Soviet-Polish relations. I reminded them that the Swedes were willing to give us a 100 million kroner credit in advance for our coal, from which we could obtain the transport, food, tools, and electrical supplies desperately needed for our rehabilitation. Other countries had made similarly attractive offers. I told them, too, that we had now agreed to pay the USSR—which, in justice, should be paying us for invading our country as an ally of Hitler—the equivalent of over 100 million dollars a year. Minc sneered, "You seem to forget how much Soviet Russia has done for us; how it liberated us and helped us."

"Helped us!" I cried. "If Hitler had not attacked them, they'd still be the enemy of Poland and all the Allies."

It was useless. The thing had been done.

Molotov was not finished, however. He hailed us before him once again.

"Now we must do something about the frontiers," he said casually. "Just a formality. All questions have been settled, of course. All we have to do is approve the line across East Prussia."

I interrupted him with, "What do you mean by 'just a formality'?" That annoyed him.

"You know very well what I'm talking about!" he snapped. "This line, and the actual course of the line at the southern end of the frontier, were agreed to and signed on July 25, 1944. Osóbka-Morawski is here. He can confirm this. He signed it."

Molotov was referring to a concession the Russians had forced their Lublin agents to make. It had been signed even before Stalin assured me during my first visit that he would reward us with a generous territorial settlement. Now, conscious of another betrayal, I wearily asked Osóbka-Morawski to show me a map describing the extent of the latest sellout.

"I forgot to bring one," he mumbled.

Molotov, naturally enough, was prepared. He produced a map and the

signed agreement. This was a blow. At Potsdam the Big Three had given Königsberg and the rest of the coast line in that region to the Soviet Union. But the actual line, agreed to by Osóbka-Morawski, gave the USSR considerably more land in the north. It had been agreed at Potsdam that the USSR would acquire Lwów and the immediate area around it. In the south the actual Curzon line had never been drawn as far south as Lwów. But now it was extended in such a way that it included Lwów and dug sharply westward to the Czechoslovakian frontier past Sianki and Użok. We had lost several valuable Polish oil refineries, the important railway center, the city of Chyrów, and much other property—by the stroke of Osóbka-Morawski's servile and treasonable pen.

I began to protest vehemently that Britain and the United States, despite the appeasing attitude that had prompted them to give Russia 48 per cent of our country, did not sanction these newly revealed seizures, especially in view of that part of the Yalta text which read:

"The three heads of Government consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line, with digressions from it in some regions of 5-8 kilometers in favor of Poland."

Molotov would not let me finish.

"I see that the new Polish government does not respect obligations undertaken by its predecessor!" he growled.

"I'm certainly not bound by the decisions made by a government that was not recognized at the time of the decisions," I said. "It had no moral authority to sign away this land. I insist that we see Stalin on this matter."

Before we could see him, however, Molotov, suddenly conciliatory, granted us permission to route our shipping from the important Polish port of Ebling to the channel that leads into the Gulf of Danzig. The channel is situated about thirty miles from Russian Königsberg and is the only outlet for such ports as we still held in that bottlenecked region.

When Stalin met us in his Kremlin office to hear a review of our talks with Molotov, he was angrier than I had ever seen him. He turned on Osóbka-Morawski and Bierut and roared a demand that they immediately renew their agreement to the frontier that had been established without the knowledge of the legal Polish government in London. They hurriedly complied. Stalin then turned on Molotov and rebuked him thunderously.

"You had no right to agree to let these people use those waters for their

shipping!" he stormed. "I will not have it! I will not have foreign spies spying on Königsberg! You know very well we have established a military sea base there."

We were dismissed like vassals and told to return to Warsaw.

Stalin turned angrily away from the servile mumblings of Osóbka-Morawski, Bierut, and the others who were trying to apologize.

A few hours later the world was informed that Russia had shown a generous attitude in its discussions about the Polish frontiers.

"Under the frontier delimitation agreement," the Moscow statement read, "besides several small deviations from the Curzon Line to the advantage of Poland, the Soviet Union has ceded to Poland two larger districts, one about 50 miles northwest of Lwów and the other in the area of the Białowieża Forest between Brest-Litovsk and the Lithuanian frontier."

One area contributed an 18-mile strip to Poland, the statement read. The other was a 12½-mile deviation in favor of the Poles, it added.

These statements were accepted as facts by the free press of the world.

Chapter Twelve

THE INTIMIDATION BEGINS

The fake Peasant Party

A poisoned cigarette

Murder in the woods

Terror, arson, boycotts

A man from the tomb

The Boy Scouts get it



THEN we flew home to Poland. There was much for me to do, politically. Our Peasant Party, though old and with roots deep in the land, had not as yet been officially recognized by the new government. Indeed, another party of precisely the same name had been formed by the Lublinites some time before. Though it was Communist-inspired, a large number of its more important figures and rank-and-file members were not Reds. Many were old members of the real Peasant Party, who had been lured into believing the new organization was the old party of Wincenty Witos and myself.

One of my first acts upon getting back to Warsaw was to call upon two old friends who stood high in the officialdom of the bogus Peasant Party. One was its chairman, Stanislaw Bańczyk; the other its general secretary, Boleslaw Ścibiorek. I was an acquaintance, too, of Franciszek Litwin, Minister of Health and a member of the executive committee of the new party.

As a result of my talks with these men it was agreed that the government-

inspired Peasant Party, which they honestly believed was under their own control, would be merged with the old Peasant Party. Witos would remain chairman of the expanded party; I would be first vice-chairman, and Bańczyk second vice-chairman.

When the Communists learned of this agreement, they announced that they would not countenance it. Jakób Berman, invoking his secret authority as a member of the Politburo, called on Bańczyk and told him, "You'll be sorry, if you dare do this."

Bańczyk forthwith told Berman that it was none of Berman's affair. "It is our business, and our business alone, if we choose to merge," Bańczyk concluded.

Berman looked at him a long time.

"Remember what I told you," he said, and left.

Later, two armed men entered Bańczyk's hotel room and covered him with their guns.

"You'll be killed if you merge with Witos and Mikołajczyk," one told him.

Bańczyk was a brave man. Moreover, he could not yet bring himself to believe that such things could happen under a government sponsored also by the United States and Great Britain.

"What have *you* got to say about such things?" he demanded angrily. "Get out!"

He probably would have been shot then and there if friends had not chosen this moment to appear at his door. The armed men quickly left.

The next day the Communist Party called a meeting of the supreme council of its fake Peasant Party. About thirty members of the new party—many of them non-Communists—appeared. More than a hundred Communists and Security Police officers then entered the hall. A motion was promptly introduced calling for the ejection of Bańczyk as chairman. Without delay it was passed.

Litwin had been similarly warned against the merger. He, too, objected. One of his security guards then offered him a cigarette, as if to close the matter. The cigarette was poisoned, and Litwin nearly died. After being ill for weeks, he finally resigned from the government.

While we were being subjected to such dealings, Ernest Bevin, the new British Foreign Minister, was telling the House of Commons on August 20, 1945:

"I indicated to the Polish representatives at Potsdam that the British people desire friendship with the Polish people, and nothing can prevent that friendship except failure to give effect to the assurances which the Polish representatives have given.

"We expect in particular that the principal Polish democratic parties, such as the Peasant Party, the Christian Labor Party and the Socialist Party, equally with the Communist Party, will be allowed to take part in the elections with full liberty to make their own programs and put up their own candidates, and that freedom of speech and impartial justice will be guaranteed to all Polish citizens.

"I inquired of Marshal Stalin whether the Soviet troops are to be withdrawn, and he assured me that they would be—with the exception of a small number required to maintain the communications necessary for the Soviet troops in Germany. That is not unreasonable. There is also the question of the prisons and secret police in Poland. That still needs to be cleared up. But with these assurances I would urge Poles overseas, both military and civilian, to go back to their country and assume their responsibilities in building the new Poland. They will render far greater service there than they can from outside."

In September, 1945, the old Peasant Party met in Cracow. Though a very ill man, its leader, Witos, was present. In one momentous week we took many decisive steps, which we announced to the world on the twenty-second of the month. First of all, we agreed that we could not merge with the Communist-inspired Peasant Party in good conscience. Our name was changed to the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), and we determined to go to the people directly with an appeal for support.

After calling for the first congress of the Polish Peasant Party, we appealed to all Poles to aid "in building a new democratic Poland, governed by law and justice, and a sound and just economic structure." Then we issued a series of declarations and slogans and set forth our program.

We declared that the Polish Peasant Party in the future could join the government only if the government would base itself on the constitution after being elected democratically. We called for freedom of the individual and for self-government in social, economic, and cultural institutions. Agreeing to the nationalization of basic industry, we stood opposed to the smothering of private enterprise, called for equal educational rights for all, and asked

for friendship with the Western Powers as well as with Russia. Finally, we stood for "peace and forgiveness for all peoples and social groups and a joining of all forces in the task of building a democratic Poland."

Władysław Kojder, a member of our executive committee, was suddenly absent from our meeting, and his absence gave us great concern. At a previous provincial meeting in Cracow, he had spoken eloquently against the continued presence of the Red Army and the growing terror of the Security Police. Then he disappeared. Later we learned that the secretary of the Communist Party in Przemyśl and Major Sobczyński, commander of the Security Police in Rzeszów, had dragged Kojder from his home. Kojder's body was found in a nearby woods. Thirty bullets were in it.

All at once leaflets littered Poznań, accusing the Polish Peasant Party and myself of "selling Poland to foreign capitalism" because I had recently said Poland's rehabilitation program needed foreign loans. I spoke in Poznań shortly after and made a point of saying, "If I indeed want to sell Poland to foreign capitalistic interests, then I must be on the same side as Stalin and Minc. For they are both seeking foreign credits."

In mid-October, 1945, I flew to Quebec to represent Poland at the formation meeting of UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, of which I became an executive committee member. At Quebec and in Washington (where I saw President Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes) I obtained considerable UNRRA aid for Poland. But at home the controlled press campaign against me was stepped up. Gomułka denounced me publicly as a "Trojan horse," "servant of capitalism" and, of course, a "reactionary."

This was nothing compared to two other setbacks that occurred while I was out of the country.

Witos died on October 31, 1945. His passing meant the end of a tremendous, inspiring force for democracy in Poland. Tens of thousands of simple, stricken Poles formed funeral corteges as his body was shipped from Cracow to his old home for burial.

On top of this tragedy the Communists created a new cabinet post, the Ministry of Regained Territories, thus watering down the authority of Kiernik, Minister of Public Administration, one of the few non-Communists in the government. The new territory, where the population was certain to be malleable inasmuch as no one would own title or deed to property, would now be under the complete domination of Communists. It was a heavy blow

to the stabilization and rehabilitation of millions in this important part of our country.

Upon my return from Quebec with Allied material aid, the attack on the Polish Peasant Party and on me was renewed at Łódź on November 23, 1945, by Berman. Two weeks later, on December 5, the Security Police murdered Ścibiorek in Łódź.

There was little chance to protest widely in our party organs or in our mass meetings. For it had taken us from June of 1945 until October to gain a license from the government to publish two Peasant Party weeklies, *Piast* and *Chłopski Sztandar*. We could not even begin publication of our daily *Gazeta Ludowa* until November 1. Furthermore, all our publications were heavily censored. We had equal difficulty securing a building for our national party headquarters. When we occupied one not long after my return, we were evicted by the Security Police. Finally we obtained office space in a six-story building on Aleje Jerozolimskie, where we were permitted to remain. Not even a letter signed by Prime Minister Osóbka-Morawski had saved us from eviction from our first headquarters. The Communist mayor of Warsaw, Stanisław Tolwinski, ignored it.

As soon as we were established, we began plans for the congress of the Polish Peasant Party, set for January, 1946—our first congress since 1939. When this was announced, the Security Police began arresting those who planned openly to attend, or even indicated they meant to join the party as members.

Ścibiorek's murder caused me to demand of the cabinet the establishment of a special commission to investigate his death, the death of Kojder, and the arrests of our members and provincial officials. Gomułka strongly opposed me.

"To form such a commission," he ruled, "would constitute a vote of non-confidence in the Minister of Security."

As an act of protest, the Polish Peasant Party members of the cabinet walked out on December 6, 1945. We came back for the next meeting because Osóbka-Morawski promised us that the commission would be formed if we returned. The commission was created, but it never operated.

The terror increased to shocking proportions.

In the Wrocław region all members of the Polish Peasant Party's executive committee for the area were arrested; some were tortured. In Bochnia the Security Police station became a house of horrors. Bartkowicz, commander

of the station, who had worked closely with the Gestapo during the occupation and who had had an unsavory record as a gangster before that, became the most feared of despots. On September 8, 1945, he murdered Mayor Józef Kołodziej, of Bogucice; Wojciech Kaczmarczyk, underground hero and local chairman of our Peasant Party's youth movement *Wici*; Władysław Kukiel, manager of a local dairy; and Stanisław Mariasz, a Peasant Party executive.

Soon after, Bartkiewicz tortured the mayor of Lapanów, Jan Jarotek, to pitilessly slow death in full view of the victim's son. He then ordered his torturers to seize Józef Szydłowski, the Peasant Party's local executive committee member, whose tongue was cut out, fingernails ripped off, and eyes seared with a hot poker before he was finally shot.

Mayor Gregorzuk of Sarnaki, near Siedlce, was killed in view of the entire village population for his series of speeches urging his constituents to interest themselves in politics. Houses in his village were burned by the Security Police.

On November 14, 1945, more than five hundred men were arrested in the Tarnobrzeg district for holding a meeting in memory of Witos. Among these were a number of high-school teachers. For warning the teachers that the Security Police were coming the students were severely beaten. In protest, more than three thousand persons in the area signed a denunciatory resolution. In time, even such protests were to be considered a crime against the state.

In the Ostrów Wielkopolski district, 150 people were pulled from their farms and interned in a camp that had been occupied by German prisoners. The Germans were freed to make room for the Poles behind the wire.

Early in November in Kępno, about three hundred persons were taken from their homes. Most of them were released after a time. Some never returned. Peasant Party officials found the graves of forty-eight of the missing men in the grounds near the Kępno Security Police Station.

On November 30 and December 1 of that year, Security Police and Red Army units fell on the villages of Lempiec and Kobusy in the Bielsk district. They shot nine Polish Peasant Party men on the pretext that they maintained contacts with the so-called "criminal underground." Among them was Józef Lempicki, father of six children.

In Miława, Security Police killed three of the four Gójski brothers and told the fourth, a newspaperman working in Warsaw for our youth movement, to

cooperate thereafter with the Security Police or face a similar fate. On January 15, 1946, just before the opening of the congress, Security Police arrested Franciszek Nygowski and Jan Brzozowski in Mława. Their naked bodies were found the following day in a nearby forest.

We had positive proof that NKVD men, so-called "advisers" of the commandants of Security Police districts, took part in murders. On January 11, 1946, in Siedlce, the Russian adviser was present and assisted in the murder of the Kotuniak family, which included the father, a Peasant Party member, the mother, and three children. Two nights later in Dziakdowo, another Russian agent was present and joined the commandant of the Security Police in the murder of the chairman of the district Peasant Party executive committee, Bernard Zieliński.

In addition to such physical terrors, which comprised only a fraction of actual offenses, the Peasant Party was taking a heavy political belaboring. We had boycotted the first session of the temporary parliament (appointed by Bierut) when it was called the previous July. Under the terms of the Moscow Agreement we were entitled to 145 seats in that assembly, or one-third of the representatives. Bierut arbitrarily offered us thirty seats and then, while we protested strongly, struck off the names of two of our more outstanding men—Mierzwa and Korboński.

The temporary parliament met again between December 29, 1945, and January 3, 1946. This time we were offered fifty-two seats, far short of the one-third to which we were entitled. We were forced to attend, however, in self-defense: for many bills would come up at this session affecting not only our party's right to exist in the country but also the future of Poland. On the agenda were the nationalization of big and little industry and the creation of a commission to draft the country's new electoral law. We had to make our voices heard on both points.

So we attended and gained minor advantages as a result of our long protests. When Minc presented the new nationalization bill, we were able to compel the government to permit the continued operation of agricultural industries by the peasant cooperatives. We got a further agreement that private businesses should be restored where they had been illegally nationalized. We failed, however, to save the nation's printing shops from nationalization—which killed the free press of Poland—and we were unable to keep some businesses employing fewer than a hundred persons from becoming nationalized. The government,

in this instance, ruled that businesses employing no more than fifty persons would be exempt, "except in cases bearing on national interests."

In answer to our protests against the murder and illegal arrest of our members, Communist spokesmen turned on me, our Minister of Education and our Minister of Posts and Telegraphs with personal abuse. They would not agree to let us name a successor to Witos's vacancy on the presidium of the temporary parliament. They did consent to give us a member on the commission charged with drafting the electoral law.

The Polish Peasant Party congress convened in Warsaw on January 19, 1946, in an atmosphere of intense feeling. We noted with pride that in face of great hardships our membership had grown to 600,000. We reviewed the terrors being visited upon us, demanded an early and free election and an end to police terror, and asked for the abolition of two ministries—Security and Propaganda. The police, we said, should be returned to the control of the Minister of Interior. As for the Ministry of Propaganda, its only function to date had been the spread of Communist information and the suppression of independent thought. The congress unanimously elected me to succeed Witos.

We announced our resolutions.

Our legal commission declared that the foundation of any democratic social order must be respect for existing law and that a government is obligated to live by the law even as is the citizen. "Disobedience of the law by a citizen leads to anarchy; disobedience displayed by the administration leads inevitably to the police state," the commission warned. The commission added:

"The spirit of freedom and of real democracy should permeate all laws and regulations, and two values should be protected by the law—the life of a man and his freedom."

Other points covered by the legal commission dealt with the need for independent courts of justice, the abolition of military tribunals, and the need for an amnesty of political prisoners. "The problem of security in Poland," said the commission, "is being solved incorrectly. The individual is being automatically treated as a suspect but cannot use such force against the administration. We must introduce into our daily life the atmosphere of peace, security, and stabilization. The civil code should be based on respect for private ownership, limited only by the welfare of the other citizens and the welfare of the country."

Our commission on self-government and administrative problems accused the government of dangerous overlapping in its services. Since the government

showed respect neither for the law nor the welfare of individual and social groups, we demanded a return to freedom of action for local governing bodies, a free election, better care of the public health, and less bureaucratic meddling in the care of the country's orphanages and homes for the aged and disabled.

The government took no official notice of our congress or its resolutions for several days. Then it acted. Through its controlled Socialist Party it sent word to the party that either we must join the government bloc by March 1, 1946, or face political annihilation.

We could visualize the fruits of rejecting the government's demand. Shortly before our congress had convened, a special meeting of Security Police officers had been called in Bydgoszcz to outline its future procedure against the Polish Peasant Party. The main speakers were Lieutenant Teodor Krześniak and Lieutenant Pawełko.

"We must call the Polish Peasant Party a party of capitalists and reactionaries, composed of landlords and factory owners," Lieutenant Krześniak told his audience. "On top of this party is Mikolajczyk, a thief and bandit. Everyone must be warned not to join this party. Would-be members must be told that they will be annihilated from the face of the earth if they join. Those in the party must be told that they will inevitably be placed in labor camps if they do not resign immediately. Others in the party must be told that, when the time arrives, Mikolajczyk will be arrested and executed."

The government's campaign of terror quickened immediately after the congress. On January 26, in the village of Górniki Nowe, near Zamość, twenty-five Security Police appeared at the farm of Jan Senderek, a Peasant Party member. His brother Stanislaw opened the door at their knock and was promptly annihilated by gunfire. When their hysterical mother kept crying, "What have you done to my son?" the police answered, "Be satisfied your other son is still alive." Jan was taken from the house, mauled for two weeks in a Security Police station, then released, a physical wreck.

Shortly thereafter in Grójec, near Warsaw, the Security Police seized five citizens, including a local judge, took them outside the town, shot them and shoveled them into a single grave.

One man, however, lived. Knowing the butchering methods of the NKVD, this man had dropped at the first rifle fire, pretending to be dead. He was buried alive in the pit with the others. Terribly wounded, he clawed his way up through the dirt and out of his tomb. He made his way to Warsaw, where

he gave me a firsthand account of the shooting and named several of the assassins.

I took these horrifyingly macabre facts to the next cabinet meeting, confronted the Communists with them, and demanded that the investigating commission be put to work immediately. The only result I obtained was this: the Peasant Party in the Gtójec district was one of the first of thirty-six district organizations later dissolved by official decree.

On February 14, 1946, in Buchałowice, near Puławy, members of the Security Police arrested Kazimierz Chabros, burned his farm, and shot his son Stanislaw before the father's eyes. One can perhaps understand the father's horror, for his only other son had been killed by the Gestapo for serving as an officer with the Polish Peasant Battalion in the Lublin area. Now, in the so-called "peace," for which that son had given his life, the brother was murdered and the father arrested.

Later, on February 28, a monthly meeting of the Peasant Youth Union, *Wici*, in Olszewice, near Lublin, was broken up by the Security Police. The police unit, headed by Franciszek Stachyra, seized Zygmunt Jakubiec and shot him in front of the youths. On the same day in Ptaszki, near Siedlce, the Security Police arrested six men, including Jan Kotowski and Stanislaw Lipinski. Kotowski's wife was knocked unconscious with rifle butts during a struggle. At the Siedlce Security Police Station, Lipinski was struck repeatedly about the head with revolver butts and then forced to lick his own blood from the floor. He was released after forty-eight hours with instructions to inform the village that it must dismiss all thought of Peasant Party activities.

Less than two weeks later the Security Police set fire to Kotowski's home. When fire equipment from a neighboring village arrived, the firemen were held back by machine-gun fire. Seven-year old Krzysia Kopera, who lived with her father and sister in the Kotowski house, was carried from a sickbed just in time to avoid being burned to death. The child's hair turned gray after the experience. The Kotowski farm was one of seven burned in the area that day.

There were many raids in the Polish Peasant Party's offices. Our own national headquarters in Warsaw suffered the first one on March 12, 1946. That was the day set for the first postwar congress in Warsaw of the Farmer's Association, whose name had now been changed to Self-help of the Peasants. Local organizations had chosen over two thousand delegates, but the majority were

arrested en route. About eight hundred finally appeared at the meeting hall, only to find the assembly room occupied by Security Police.

As Minister of Agriculture I was one of the scheduled speakers. When I began my talk to the farmers, the Security Police claque roared me down. As soon as I could make my voice heard, I called out to the farmer delegates to leave the hall with me and reconvene in the party headquarters.

We marched through the streets to the new meeting place. There we formally protested and made many mimeographed copies of our grievances. Copies of the protest were dispatched to Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski.

That night the Security Police raided our headquarters, destroyed some of our furniture and records, seized all mimeographed copies of the protest, and announced that "illegal literature" had been discovered.

Three of our clerks were arrested. They reappeared at headquarters several days later to tell of the grilling they had received at the hands of the Security Police. All had been promised future lenience if they would serve as spies on our activities.

We had looked forward to the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Polish Peasant Party, thinking that our members could stage simultaneous mass meetings throughout the country to protest against what was happening. But in April, before the anniversary, Minister of Security Stanislaw Radkiewicz took control of national assemblies from Kiernik and forbade the anniversary demonstrations.

It was difficult for me to maintain even the pretense of a friendship with the Communist members of the government after the big youth convention in Stettin in April, 1946. This meeting had been called by the government, which had issued invitations to the various ambassadors and envoys stationed in Warsaw. It boomeranged either tragically or humorously, depending on one's viewpoint.

When members of the cabinet, including myself, arrived in Stettin, about sixty thousand boys and girls were on hand to welcome us. Bierut, taking a chance, mounted a platform to address the boys and girls. He had hardly got in a word when his voice was drowned out. Many of the children were shouting my name. Indignant, Bierut walked off the platform. Later in the night he decided that the Boy Scouts had been the chief offenders, and hence he issued an order barring them from the review and the open-air Holy Mass the following day.

On that next day banners were presented by the city of Stettin to the three regiments stationed there. Three soldiers identified on the program as heroes of the Polish Army accepted the banners. All were Russian. When one attempted to reply in a stilted little speech in Polish that had been carefully memorized, I thought—with remorse and shock—of the true Poles who had fought at Cassino and in Normandy and with the RAF. The remaining two “Poles” spoke so badly and with such a pronounced Russian accent that the microphone was cut off by Minister of Public Information Stefan Matuszewski, who is a defrocked priest.

In the subsequent parade two units of Communist youths were placed on either side of the reviewing stand. They kept chanting, in singsong fashion, “Long live Bierut!” When I passed them, the boys, on signal, began to shout, “To London! To London! To London!” I could not resist an answer. Just before I left the platform I turned to them and asked, “Want to go with me?” There followed a ludicrous moment of indecision, then the boyhood that remained in them came to the top and many shouted back, “Yes, certainly,” before they were commanded to be silent.

When the ceremonies had moved on elsewhere, the Boy Scouts returned to the parade grounds and with their own leaders standing beneath the reviewing stand marched for five hours. They demonstrated so vigorously later that night that the Security Police, unable to control them in all sections of the city, asked me to tour Stettin and speak to them. Immediately after the youth convention, Osóbka-Morawski announced in a cabinet meeting that on Bierut’s demand he was dissolving the Boy Scouts. I protested so emphatically that he relented, but he said, “There will be changes in the organization. We’ll appoint new scout leaders.” He followed through with his threat, but the Boy Scouts courageously resisted. When they were subsequently forced to march in review past Tito on the latter’s visit to Warsaw, they turned their heads in the opposite direction.

The Communists tightened their hold on Poland with two bold moves at the meeting of the temporary parliament late in April, 1946. First, they provided formally for a Referendum, in the hope of avoiding the free election that they had promised the Big Three. In addition, they legalized the formation of a “voluntary” citizens militia called “ORMO,” which permitted them eventually to arm 120,000 hand-picked thugs and ex-convicts, who helped to expand and make more efficient the work of the Security Police.

The Communist reasoning behind the Referendum move was simple. They felt they could avert the promised election completely by demonstrating to the British and Americans that there was complete unanimity of opinion on major matters within Poland.

With that hoped-for unanimity in mind the Communists selected three Referendum questions on which little or no opposition could be expected. They also pointed to the fact that the Socialist Party had initiated the call for a Referendum, though, of course, the top posts of that party had been in Communist hands for nearly a year.

When the ruse became apparent, I informed them that the Polish Peasant Party would boycott the Referendum. The Communists knew this would make a bad impression on the outside world, and they promised, therefore, that if the Polish Peasant Party would take part, the government would order the elections held in the autumn of 1946.

This gave us an opening we had long wanted. For Bierut had made no public announcement about the exact date of the promised elections, and one of our prime goals in the temporary April parliament was to pin him down.

Bańczyk made a remarkable address on the opening day of the session. In the course of it he moved that the government must stage the elections before July 28, 1946. He chose that date because Bierut had promised the Western Allies, in Potsdam, that the "free and unfettered" Polish elections would be held "within a year."

The motion forced Osóbka-Morawski to state, for the public record, that the elections would be held "in the autumn."

Bańczyk was not finished. He attacked the formation of the ORMO, seeing in it only an extension of the terror that was spreading through Poland. He produced proof that thirty-two outstanding Peasant Party local leaders had been murdered in the Miechów district alone during the previous month. Among many other cases that he presented, Bańczyk told the tragedy of Dr. Szczepan Nędzwiedzki, a kindly physician of Nowy Sącz, who had been cruelly murdered by the Security Police only a short time after he had finally been able to reach his home—after years in a German concentration camp.

"You are introducing a totalitarian system into Poland," Bańczyk cried to the Communists in the chamber. "But you lack the courage to call yourselves Communists openly. You hide behind the cloak of the Workers' Party. You are pushing the nation into a blind alley. We demand that you stop, for you are

forcing the people to fight back in self-defense—you are forcing people into the underground.”

When he had finished, we were excoriated as “defenders of the criminal underground,” and a few days later the terroristic program reached a new height when 333 farms were burned in Wawolnica, near Puławy, during a single day.

Because of rigid censorship we could not bring the story of this terror to the people. So we fought back through our still-remaining freedom of assembly. I spoke at mass demonstrations in Katowice, Opole, and Radom and found the people filled with disgust for the Communist rule and vigorously determined to combat it.

The Communists made determined efforts to break up all of our meetings. In Katowice they ordered the workers from nearby mines and factories to gather in their own meetings at the time of our scheduled meeting and to demonstrate against me. The workers were provided with transportation, but upon reaching their destination thousands escaped and ran to our meeting. Our group grew until it reached 50,000, while the counterdemonstration never attracted more than 2,000. The Security Police attempted to disperse our huge throng, spread through the streets near the Higher Technical School; but the police were vastly outnumbered and knew it. They called for military units to aid them, and these arrived in armed cars and nudged into the crowd.

The mood of the great gathering was such that the Communists, heavily armed though they were, became fearful. The commandant of the local Security Police finally made his way to me and agreed to withdraw if I promised to keep the people quiet.

I answered that I believed I could keep the people quiet but that I would not speak until he had withdrawn his armed men. When the Communists yielded, we staged a great demonstration. I spoke, finally, from the ledge of a window on the second floor of the school, and as I looked over the sea of heads—heads of a people who had retained their national instincts though under German rule for centuries—I felt with pride that Poland would never die.

At Radom our crowd once again was larger than the Communists anticipated. The band of thugs that they sent against us here was quickly absorbed and subdued by the size of the mob. A Communist phoned a local army unit to rush to the scene, but the unit proved to be pure and unadulterated Polish, and its men beat up the Communist agitators.

At Opole the Communists crowded into our meeting hall and interrupted our speakers repeatedly. Before I spoke, I slipped out of the hall while one of our men was attempting to get through his address. Locking the doors of the assembly hall from the outside, my party and I moved to the roof of the building, which commanded a view of thousands of persons who had been unable to gain admission. We disconnected the rooftop loud-speakers from the microphone within the hall and set up another microphone. Over this I was able to complete my full speech, uninterrupted, before the Communists knew that they had been tricked.

They were ready for us at Plock, however. Here they seized the hall the night before, arrested our guards, pitilessly beat up many party members in the area, and succeeded in canceling the meeting.

The troubles of the Polish Peasant Party mounted on May 1, 1946, as a result of a Communist plot that misfired. To utilize the May 1 Red Holiday against me, Communist paraders had been ordered to carry large pictures of Churchill and myself. The idea was to brand the two of us as "reactionaries." But the Communists overlooked the unquenchable love of the Polish people for Churchill. Instead of gaining the boos they expected, the Communists, to their dismay, saw the people cheering wildly.

Security Police were ordered to beat all who persisted in cheering, and many arrests were made. Later in the day, the enraged Gomulka told a large gathering that the government intended to wipe out all reactionary and pro-German parties, naming the Peasant Party as one of these.

On May 3, our National Day, Radkiewicz forbade the people to gather in large crowds. His order arrived late in Cracow and other places. Thousands of Poles in Cracow, including many students, attended church on the morning of the holiday. As they emerged, Security Police attacked them. The students retreated to a large dormitory of the University of Cracow, and Red Army units closed in and machine-gunned the building. Several hundred of the youths were arrested. Many of these were placed on trial, and some, whose offense seems to have been that they had attended mass, were sentenced to as much as ten years of hard labor.

On the same day in Katowice the Security Police, angered by the success of the meeting we had held a few days earlier, broke up a National Day parade, trampled our banners, and destroyed a tapestry of the Blessed Virgin. There were similar actions in Gliwice, Wloclawek, Inowroclaw, and Lublin. A few

days later at Gdańsk I left church to find the area ringed with Security Police, their machine guns ready. There was no shooting as we walked quietly through their lines, giving them no cause to pull their triggers.

The Security Police attempted to bully our subsequent meeting, however, but rugged and independent dockworkers turned on them and threw them from the place. Two weeks later the police raided a meeting of these same workers. In the ensuing battle several workers were killed, in addition to two members of the Security Police. The leaders of the dockworkers' union were arrested and sent to Russia as persons "too dangerous to be living in a harbor area." Hundreds of members of the union were evicted from their homes and scattered through the country.

We managed to hold one last big demonstration on May 11, 1946, at Palmiry, where Maciej Rataj, the man who had died organizing the successful peasant resistance to the Nazis, lay buried. We were able to gather 60,000 Poles in Palmiry that day, for we had artfully invited Bierut to speak, thus gaining permission to gather. On the whole, however, the meeting was depressing, for the Communists had their own ulterior motive in allowing us to stage it. Throughout the meeting Red Air Force planes roared overhead, dropping leaflets condemning the Polish Peasant Party—leaflets that fell on the grave of a man who was a great national hero in the fight against the Germans.

The battle lines between the Polish Peasant Party and the Communists were clearly drawn by this time. Shortly before the leaflet dropping, the Communist Sokorski, the appointed chairman of the Communist trade unions, who had been designated to pervert the Polish education system, had been blunt in a speech in the temporary parliament.

"The time is ripe for the militia, the Security Police and the army to take guns in hand and ruthlessly wipe out all reactionaries," he barked. He looked at our little delegation of Polish Peasant Party members before he continued, "And I mean not only those in the forests but those sitting right here in this hall."

Chapter Thirteen

REFERENDUM

The police state emerges

Demonstrations against fraud

We win but are counted out

Communists inspire pogroms

Stalin is weary

He demands a stolen election



THE Polish Referendum of June 30, 1946, was both a fraud and an acknowledgment by the government that it was operating a police state. Above all, it was a memorable demonstration by the Polish people against both fraud and terror.

The Referendum ballot contained three deceitfully chosen questions. The wording was innocent enough:

1. Are you in favor of the abolishment of the Senate?
2. Are you for making permanent, through the future Constitution, the economic system instituted by the land-reform and nationalization of the basic industries, with maintenance of the rights of private enterprise?
3. Are you for the Polish Western frontiers as fixed on the Baltic and on the Oder and Neisse?

Examining these, we of the Peasant Party felt we might use the first question as a weapon for a gigantic demonstration against the police state.

The other questions offered little opportunity for a show of independent

thought. Regardless of political belief, a vast majority of Poles were in favor of land reform, nationalization of basic industries, and maintenance of the rights of private enterprise. As for the third question, all Poles wanted their country to regain their historical land in the west and to compensate for the 70,000 square miles lost in the east.

Subtle possibilities were lurking in the first question. It was true, certainly, that even the more conservative prewar circles in Poland had favored abolishing the Polish senate. Many Poles had a feeling similar to the feeling of some of the British people towards the House of Lords.

The Communists, however, hoped to kill the senate in order to make it easier to stuff Kremlin-dictated regulations down our throats. They knew, too, that under the 1921 constitution the senate shared the right of parliament to choose a Polish president, and they wanted to dispense with the irksome task of clearing the Communist candidate through two waves of legislative opposition.

We decided to vote "No" on the first question as a "protest against political terror, against dissolving local units of the Polish Peasant Party, against false arrests and censorship, and against the Referendum itself, as an illegal change in the Constitution of 1921." The Polish Peasant Party slogan became, "If you vote 'Yes' on the first question, you are giving a vote of confidence to the police methods of the Provisional Government." Though I was a Deputy Prime Minister of that government, I prayed for the day when I might see it dissolved and its tyranny scattered forever.

The pressure on the Polish Peasant Party quickened as soon as we announced our plans to vote negatively on the first question. Articles containing our point of view were censored out of the *Gazeta Ludowa*, and the circulation of the paper was held down to 70,000—one-eighth of its potential—by scant allocations of newsprint. There were Communist demonstrations in front of our Warsaw headquarters. Communists on the floor above us blocked off our view by lowering signs in front of our office windows. The signs read, "Three Times Yes!"—as if we were endorsing that type of voting. Throughout the country our party meetings were attacked by armed brigands, mass arrests were made, and men died for affirming in public that the Big Three had guaranteed at Yalta the right of all Poles to vote as they pleased.

The Polish Peasant Party cards of those murdered or imprisoned were collected by the Security Police and either given to Poles who had collaborated with the Germans during the occupation or planted on the bodies of dead

mobsters. The collaborators, completely under the control of the Communists, were ordered to attend our meetings.

It was the intention of the government to use this latter ruse as a pretext for dissolving the party in ostensibly legal fashion, for both Yalta and Potsdam had stipulated that only "democratic and anti-Nazi parties" would be permitted in postwar Poland. To forestall the spurious charge that we were pro-Nazi, I ordered all identification cards turned in at headquarters throughout the country to be rechecked and stamped. In this way we were able to weed out the *agents provocateurs*.

On the day before the Referendum the Yugoslav soccer team played an all-star Polish squad at the Polish Army Stadium in Warsaw. The 25,000 spectators who attended had been assured, in advance, that there would be no speeches—only sport. But the Communists could not resist the opportunity. Minister Rzymowski delayed the start of the match by a long speech, urging those on hand to vote affirmatively on all questions of the Referendum. He was followed at the microphone by the Communist president, Grubecki, of the Polish-Yugoslav Society. When a third speaker attempted to prolong what was becoming a political meeting, the crowd shouted him down and demanded that the contest begin.

I arrived shortly after the start of the game and took a seat in the crowd. During the intermission the third Communist speaker again attempted to finish what he had to say. But the crowd spotted me and drowned him out by shouting my name, spelling it out in cadence like an organized cheer. Those on the opposite side of the stadium broke through police and army lines and began to swarm across the playing field towards my seat. When the police struck a few of them, the crowd turned angrily on them, and many more spectators joined in the rush across the field.

I thanked the crowd for its demonstration and appealed to it to return to its place and let the game go on. Thus my words and the cheers those words evoked were accidentally broadcast throughout Poland as the radio was carrying an account of the proceedings at the stadium. Because of his "oversight" the announcer in charge was later dismissed. Orders were subsequently given to surround all microphones with Communists schooled to shout pro-Red slogans in the event any anti-Communist demonstration started within pickup distance of the microphone.

I left the stadium shortly after the resumption of play, and as my car pulled

away from the stadium, it was passed by a number of cars loaded with armed Security Police. Despite the police a large crowd of soccer fans marched from the stadium to our party headquarters after the game and demonstrated in front of the building. A number were arrested. Mention of the entire incident was censored from *Gazeta Ludowa*.

On the day of the Referendum the Communists gave a vivid demonstration of their method of conducting a ballot. More or less impartial Popular Voting Commissions, set up at my repeated demands to supervise the voting and count the ballots, were terrorized at gun point by the Security Police. In some sections the Security Police seized the ballot boxes and destroyed all ballots that contained the word "No" in response to the first question. I was able to show foreign correspondents thousands of partially burned ballots of this type.

In Cracow Communist members of the Popular Voting Commission became so frightened by what the ballots showed that they actually ran from the counting room in fear of being censored for this burst of independent thinking. Independent members of the commission quickly took charge and wired the official results to Warsaw before the Communists returned. These results actually reached print in official announcements, a freakish turn of events that caused Communist propaganda mills thereafter to proclaim Cracow "a reactionary city, which must be punished."

Brave commissioners were able to save their ballot boxes in parts of fourteen of the sixteen Polish provinces. These boxes represented 2,805 districts. The response in these districts to question number 1 was:

<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
83.54 per cent	16.46 per cent

The Provisional Government announced the "official result" after ten days. The count on question number 1, it said, showed:

<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
32 per cent	68 per cent

Under threat of immediate suspension we were forced to print these figures in *Gazeta Ludowa* after the true results had been blue-penciled by the censor.

The day after the Referendum, and before the spurious totals were released, the offices I shared with Osóbka-Morawski, Gomułka, and their sinister superior Berman, who headed the secret supergovernment of Poland, were

deserted. The Communists had been startled by the preponderance of "No" ballots, and apparently none of them cared to face the others. The only man on hand was an NKVD guard.

"I congratulate you on the results of the Referendum," he said to me without warmth. "But what will happen now?"

What happened, of course, was the announcement of the wholly faked totals. We protested immediately to the Commissioner General of Popular Voting in a long memorandum, which contained documented infractions of the Polish voting laws, examples of criminal coercion, false entries, packed voting lists, arrests of our party members, and other violations. We produced evidence showing that commissioners named by the party to help supervise the voting had been dismissed, and we demanded that the Referendum be declared invalid.

When the protest was ignored, I called a press conference attended by a dozen British and American correspondents, a Russian, and a Frenchman. I knew the consequences of taking our case to the free press of the west, but by now there was no other course. I listed the protests sent to the Commissioner General of Popular Voting, Barcikowski, and the method by which he was able to avoid taking action.

"Our protest was turned over to the presidium of the National Council [temporary parliament]," I told the reporters. "We of the Polish Peasant Party have no representative in the presidium, although this was provided for in the Moscow Agreement that formed the present government. We were, therefore, unable to defend our position.

"We cannot publish the true result of the Referendum in our press. This interview with the foreign press is our only unfettered means of informing public opinion."

To the foreign correspondents I distributed detailed information pertaining to confiscations, threats, and terrorism; a list of more than one thousand Polish Peasant Party members who had been jailed just before the Referendum, the murder lists, examples of the complete lack of secrecy in connection with the balloting, cases of ballots being torn from the hands of those who attempted to vote "No" to the first question, cases of voting places being abruptly closed when it became apparent that the vote would go against the government, illegal balloting by nonregistered Poles and aliens, and many other such abuses.

A transcript of the press conference shows the following questions and my answers:

Question: Did the Polish Peasant Party attempt to publish its results?

Answer: Yes, but this was immediately censored.

Question: Was an attempt made to publish your protests?

Answer: Yes, and this also was censored.

Question: What are your party's plans for the forthcoming elections?

Answer: Let me first say that we received thousands of letters after the Referendum, all expressing the deepest regret and indignation over the fraud. The percentage of voters was high because people wanted to express their will legally. Now they ask us if we will be able to secure an honest election, in view of what happened at the Referendum. Many say that unless they can be assured of an honest election they will not go to the polls.

To provide an honest election each Commission will have to be representative of all parties. Legal guarantees must be found to secure all persons from terror. Armed men must be removed from polling places. The Polish Peasant Party must receive guarantees of its freedom of action, particularly with reference to meetings, censorship, allotment of paper, an increased issue of periodicals, the right to use the radio.

I might add that many of the letters received after the Referendum urged us to secure from the Big Three Powers a guarantee that the elections will follow the lines agreed to in Yalta.

Question: Is what you outline the program of the Polish Peasant Party or the will of the nation?

Answer: This is the voice of simple people, written from the heart. The parliamentary fraction of our party will advance proposals for legal security from abuses committed in the Referendum. We hope to avoid repetition.

Question: How many commission members were there from the Polish Peasant Party during the Referendum?

Answer: There were about fourteen thousand Commissions spread through the country that day, totalling about seventy thousand members. We had been guaranteed a one-third representation on such boards. But only about three thousand Polish Peasant Party members were permitted to serve on the day in question.

None of the above appeared in any Polish paper. When Communists abroad sent back texts of what the foreign correspondents had written, I was pronounced a "traitor" in the Polish press. I tried to reply in a speech in Krotoszyn.

"Who is the traitor in this case," I asked, "he who falsified the will of the people or he who spoke the truth?" This and many other portions of the

speech, including a call for a truly "free and unfettered" election, were censored in the news reports.

The government took immediate steps to punish Cracow for the publication of that city's truthful Referendum count. Walas, the Communist mayor, announced that 44 per cent of the people of Cracow had been "officially" revealed as "reactionaries" and "traitors." He announced his intention to rid the city of these inhabitants. The Socialist Party obediently chimed in with a special attack on "reactionary clergymen."

Attacks on Jewish populations were simultaneously ordered in the hope of diverting the attention of the west from the boldly corrupt Referendum. In Częstochowa the people were told that a camel—part of the Red Army's livestock—would be displayed in the market place. When the people had gathered to view the animal, Security Police raced through the crowd shouting, "The Jews are killing our people!" A riot was narrowly averted by a quick-thinking priest who stood up and branded the shouting as a provocation.

In Kielce, Major Sobczyński, the Security Police officer responsible for the murder of Kojder in Rzeszów, now ordered foundry workers to gather at a certain time in the market place for a meeting. His plan was to point to a Jewish boarding house that fronted on the market place and to have his operatives shout that Polish children were being killed there. Major Sobczyński hoped to produce a rush on the building, in which case the army would open fire on the crowd. This would add to the terror of the times.

But the Communists had forgotten to remove the telephone from the boardinghouse. A rabbi, informed that a mob was being provoked to attack the place, phoned the local army headquarters to appeal for protection. Troops soon arrived under the command of a Russian colonel. The colonel—who was, of course, familiar with the entire plot—was surprised to see that the crowd on which his men were scheduled to fire had not as yet gathered. He had to change his plans. Lacking all pity, he sent his men against the boardinghouse, killing forty-one of its Jewish occupants and wounding forty others. In the hope of arousing the impending crowd to an overt act against the army he ordered the dead thrown into the streets. Any movement of the crowd would have been his cue to shoot into the gathering.

The workers, however, crossed everybody up by escaping while en route to the scene of their intended slaughter.

I received news of the Kielce crimes during a cabinet meeting and de-

manded at once that a special commission be set up and immediately sent into action. Radkiewicz bluntly rejected the demand. On the same day the temporary parliament rejected a similar demand put forward by Karminski, Polish Peasant Party member of the temporary Parliament.

In desperation I tried to get a story into *Gazeta Ludowa*, giving full details and condemning the frightful incident. This was censored *in toto*. The controlled press, on the other hand, ran a story saying that "certain reactionaries, enraged because they lost the Referendum, have now turned to killing Jews." Gomulka openly accused the Polish Peasant Party of being responsible for the murders in Kielce. Osóbka-Morawski accused Cardinal Hlond of inciting the murders.

Survivors of the massacre got the real information to the foreign press. As a result, the government eventually arrested Major Sobczyński and Gwiazdowicz, commander of the militia in the province concerned. Both were released within a few weeks. There was a minor trial, and a few civilians were sentenced for pogrom activity. It was not until five months later that several members of the militia and Security Police—Lieutenants Badlinski, Dagorski, Sadek, and Krawczyk—were found guilty, not for the murders but for "neglect of duty." Majors Sobczyński and Gwiazdowicz never have been brought to trial.

Shortly after the disastrous Referendum, Berman, Bierut, Gomulka, and some other Polish Communists were ordered to Moscow to receive instructions from Stalin on the forthcoming Polish elections. After they returned, Stalin summoned Socialist leaders Osóbka-Morawski, Szwalbe, Vice-president of Poland, and Cyrankiewicz, general secretary of the bogus Socialist party.

The Socialists came bearing complaints. Osóbka-Morawski protested to Stalin that the Communists were not returning the cooperation which he, as Prime Minister, was giving them. He outlined one example. The Security Police had recently arrested a famous old-line Socialist named Wąsik, though the man was quite ill. News of the arrest reached Osóbka-Morawski through the Socialist Vice-minister Wachowicz of the Ministry of Security. Osóbka-Morawski ordered Wąsik delivered to him at his Warsaw offices, and after salving the old man's wounded feelings sent him home in an official car. A few hours later Radkiewicz rearrested Wąsik and forced Wachowicz to resign.

Suddenly weary with his puppets and their internal troubles, Stalin dis-

missed them with a command that they appear later at the Kremlin, along with the Polish Communists, for a joint meeting that would deal with the future of Poland.

Before the two groups could return to Moscow for final instructions, both the British and the Americans made formal inquiries concerning the election. The British note arrived in Warsaw on August 19. It recalled that at the Moscow conference, which set up the Provisional Government, the Polish leaders had accepted the obligation to hold free elections, and for that reason the Provisional Government had been recognized. The note continued:

In view of their responsibilities in connection with the elections, His Majesty's Government have been concerned to hear from his Majesty's representative in Warsaw that it is widely believed in Poland that grave irregularities occurred in connection with the Referendum.

In particular it is stated that many leading supporters of the Polish Peasant Party were arrested shortly before the Referendum and that this party did not enjoy equally with other parties the customary democratic rights of assembly and public expression.

It is alleged that in some places the Army was made to vote collectively and without conditions of secrecy. It is further alleged that the count was interfered with after the removal of ballot boxes from the polling stations.

His Majesty's Government wish to emphasize their conviction that it is essential, for the carrying out of free elections, that (1) all democratic and anti-Nazi parties should be allowed equal facilities to conduct election campaigns freely without arrest or threat of arrest and without discriminatory restriction; (2) that these parties should be represented on all Electoral Commissions and that votes should be counted in the presence of representatives of all parties; (3) that there should be an adequate system of appealing in the event of election disputes.

The British note specifically added that the term "democratic and anti-Nazi parties" should include the Polish Peasant Party.

The American note protested "oppressive acts which prevent normal democratic political activity." It accused the Provisional Government of permitting political persecution through arrests, censorship, administrative interference, and other acts. It asked for a guarantee of political freedom in the elections and in other particulars reflected the sentiments of the British note.

Acting on instructions from Moscow, Bierut ordered the Polish ambassadors in London and Washington to present official protests to the Foreign Office and State Department on "this infringement of Poland's sovereign

rights" and "interference in her internal affairs." The Polish protests added that nothing in the situation in Poland had warranted the delivery of the British and American notes; that the Provisional Government had repeatedly affirmed its intention of holding free and unfettered elections; that the electoral law to be voted on by the National Council would be "definitely no less democratic than in many western countries"; and that nothing in the Potsdam Agreement gave foreign powers the right to supervise the Polish electoral laws or Polish party politics. British criticism of the conduct of the Referendum, the protest to London stated, was "based purely on anonymous allegations."

The two groups of Polish Communist and Socialist leaders dutifully returned to the Kremlin on August 28, 1946, thus causing the postponement of the scheduled meeting of our temporary parliament.

At the meeting in the Kremlin Stalin personally dictated the course of the Polish election, ruling on its date and warning his agents that the "blunders" of the Referendum must not be repeated. He demanded that the spirit of all independent action in Poland be broken before the election and dictated the mathematical outcome of the balloting-to-be. The deputies were ordered to defeat, by any means, all prospects of a call from within Poland for the formation of an international supervisory commission. Poland, said Stalin, must continue to reject any "interference" from the west.

According to the Russian dictator's orders, the Polish Peasant Party must be accused of being pro-German and a servant of foreign capitalism. Its rural units must be dissolved, and its candidates must be forced to withdraw their names. As for me, Stalin said that I must be isolated, and the Western Powers must be prepared for my eventual liquidation.

Stalin then named Cyrankiewicz as the man who must become Prime Minister. Cyrankiewicz was a known Socialist, and as Prime Minister he might persuade the Western Powers to believe that political freedom still existed in Poland. In addition, he was even more subservient than Osóbka-Morawski.

Stalin ordered his agents to do what they could to force the Polish Peasant Party into the government bloc. If we agreed to enter the bloc, we would be given 25 per cent of the seats in the parliament. If we refused, we would receive only 10 per cent. The actual numerical vote of the people would not matter, for Stalin demanded of these men that the "election must be won

before the election." He demanded that the terroristic program be stepped up in such a way as to force the people to vote for the bloc.

At the same meeting it was decreed that the Socialists, having dutifully joined the bloc, would be rewarded with 25 per cent of the seats. The combination of the Workers' Party and three fully dominated Communist satellite parties would hold the heavy majority of seats.

One of the Socialists spoke up and asked, "What about the Americans and British? What will they do if they discover that the election returns have been falsified?"

"Do not worry about the Americans and British," Stalin replied harshly. "There will be no war about the Polish elections. They will probably make a protest, but this will only be a paper protest. You will reject this protest and will issue continued propaganda to the effect that Mikolajczyk's party lost because he associated himself with the criminal underground. Mikolajczyk also opposed the new western frontier of Poland and is a reactionary who wishes to reinstall the capitalists and landowners. Furthermore, he is an agent for foreign intelligence and moneyed interests. If you repeat these charges often enough, some of the people in the United States and Great Britain will believe you, and they will refuse to join in the protests their governments will make."

Thereupon Stalin dismissed them, after ordering them to send him—secretly—the real results of the election.

"I want to see," he told them, "how influential you actually are."

They returned to Warsaw on the evening of August 30, 1946, a few hours before I left for Copenhagen to attend a meeting of UN's Food and Agricultural Organization. While I was in Denmark, attempting to bring physical relief to a country that needed so much more, United States Secretary of State James F. Byrnes made his Stuttgart speech.

Byrnes told his German audience that the western frontier of Poland, which we had been assured would be the Oder-Western Neisse line, including Stettin, was not necessarily permanent. He added that Stalin had taken "unilateral" action in this respect, over the complaints of the United States and Britain. In short, he held out to the Germans the possibility that they would not lose as much of prewar eastern Germany as was generally expected.

When the speech reached Copenhagen, I made a declaration to the press

protesting against it. I pointed out the herculean effort of more than a million Poles, who had moved from central Poland to the new area and who were bringing new life to it at the expense of old areas that were so desperately in need of rehabilitation. I spoke, too, of the 3,000,000 Poles coming empty-handed from the east, many of them worn down by years of slavery in the USSR. They had to be supplied with livestock and tools—a heavy drain on the central portion of the country—before they could move on to their new homes. If we were now deprived of this western territory, I protested, it would mean that about five million Poles would again be forced to move and that their only destination must be the remainder of an over-crowded and depressed country. This would work not only tremendous hardship but would be in direct violation of the section on migration in the Potsdam Agreement.

My statement gained wide circulation. It was suppressed in Poland.

Two days after the Byrnes speech on Sunday, September 8, 1946, Gomułka inflamed a large crowd at a Warsaw meeting. He then gave the signal to a mob of his gangsters to march on the American Embassy and demonstrate against United States Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane. The mob, bearing a stolen Socialist Party banner, moved from the Embassy to the main headquarters of the Polish Peasant Party, smashed our offices and furnishings, burned party records and valuable files of the *Gazeta Ludowa*. We, who had been unable to join in the protest against Byrnes's speech because of censorship, were now attacked for *not* joining in the general condemnation. I personally was attacked in the other papers as a "pro-Hitlerite opposed to the western frontier," and it was pointed out that the *Gazeta Ludowa* had not participated in the protest.

The destruction of democratic processes in Poland continued ruthlessly. The Agreement, out of which sprang the Provisional Government, had provided a self-governing organization for agriculture. The self-government in Polish agriculture disappeared and was replaced by the Communist-controlled Self-help of the Peasant.

The Communists also took control of housing. One of their first acts was to seize various Polish Peasant Party headquarters throughout the country and to give them to the Communist organization. Polish Peasant Party members were frequently evicted from their homes or farms by a special housing commission set up by the Reds.

A special organization was formed to "fight economic sabotage." It soon confined itself to the confiscation of private businesses, whose owners were accused of profiteering or nonpayment of arbitrarily fixed taxes. In addition, it deprived the Polish worker of his right to strike or change his job.

The Polish Peasant Party held the post of Minister of Education. But a newly formed commission for the reorganization of education in the high schools was placed in a position above the ministry and began a thorough communization of the entire educational system.

Attacks on Polish Peasant Party meetings by armed bands became the rule instead of the exception. It was almost impossible for any Peasant Party speaker to make his words heard above the organized jeering from bands of thugs in each meeting.

But the terror was worse in certain localities than in others. It was particularly nasty in villages and cities too remote to be included on the tours of foreign correspondents.

In Grójec, for instance, where the Polish Peasant Party had been dissolved after I gave the cabinet the shocking details of a victim who had literally returned from his grave, it reached a peak during the funeral of Stefan Czempieński, a heroic member of the Home Army who had distinguished himself in the long fight against the Nazis only to be killed by the Reds. Czempieński's coffin and funeral procession were treated as moving targets by a Grójec Security officer named Smoliński, who ran from his barracks and filled the corpse with bullets. In the course of his orgy Smoliński wounded a pallbearer. After this wild man had emptied his revolver, he used its butt to club a priest. Our story of the Grójec outrage was completely censored out of *Gazeta Ludowa*.

But Grójec was only one place. Polish Peasant Party offices and members were being assaulted simultaneously all over the country.

The temporary parliament was convened on September 20, there being no further orders for its leading figures to appear in Moscow. One of the first speakers was our member, Madame Hanna Chorażyna. She demanded parliamentary action on the twenty-six protests²⁹ against Security Police and People's Militia arrests, murders, and confiscations we had previously presented.

Madame Chorażyna demanded that the cases be placed on the agenda of the session. Communist members of the parliament roared disapproval,

and her motion failed. Later she made a superb speech on freedom of the press. It was fully censored. Several hours later she barely escaped death, along with her son, when a barrage of bullets crashed through the windows of her home.

When Madame Chorążyna's motion was defeated, her place on the speaker's dais was taken by our budget authority, Stanislaw Mazur, who introduced testimony that fifty-five farms had been burned by the Security Police in the Siedlce district alone. Bierut commanded him to stop, but he was strongly supported by our vice-chairman, Bańczyk. Bańczyk, too, was cried down, and the rostrum was seized by a Communist member, Bienkowski.

Mazur and Bańczyk were then ordered to appear before a special disciplinary committee of the temporary parliament to show cause why they should not be dismissed.

This action aroused our "whip," Zygmunt Załęski, to such an extent that he shouted:

"We are a free people. You are not privileged to silence us. As long as we live, and as long as terror and violations of the law exist, we will speak."

Biénkowski answered for the Communists:

"You are traitors," he roared. "It is traitorous to speak aloud of such things as you have brought up today. You are succeeding only in supplying Byrnes with ammunition for another speech."

His words were dutifully echoed by Cyrankiewicz, soon to be Prime Minister, and the stormy session moved on. The Communists, for a change, directed their fire against another independent party—the Christian Labor Party.

Karol Popiel had been formally invited to return to Warsaw by the terms of the Moscow Agreement and to reestablish his old party. But the Communists obstructed his every attempt to operate. A few days before the opening of the congress that would have restored his party, Popiel's Warsaw headquarters were seized, the party newspaper taken, employees arrested, and the congress canceled.

Popiel was replaced as chairman of the Christian Labor Party by Feliks Widy-Wirski, a confessed atheist and convicted abortionist.

Now, at the meeting of the temporary parliament, the Communists completed their destruction of the party's remaining independence. They introduced a motion to expel seven of the party's eight M.P.'s. Popiel made an impassioned defense for his small representation; when his proposals were

rejected, he resigned and led his unhappy group from the chamber. Thus the independent Christian Labor Party in Poland ceased to exist.

The Communists now set about the job of forcing their electoral law upon the remainder of the chamber. On the surface it appeared to be democratic and in keeping with the Polish Constitution of 1921. It provided for "universal, equal, direct, secret, and proportional suffrage." A voter had to be twenty-one years of age, a candidate for the new parliament, twenty-five. The traditional ban against active military personnel either voting or standing as candidates had been lifted.

The new parliament was to be made up of 444 seats, 372 of the candidates to be chosen from 52 electoral districts and the remainder from the so-called "state list." State list candidates needed the signatures of 500 registered voters to become eligible. District list candidates needed 100 such supporters.

We noticed in the draft of the electoral law a number of opportunities for fraud. Our general secretary, Stanisław Wójcik, took the floor to reveal them.

"Let me say at the start that we want no repetition of the fraudulent Referendum," Wójcik began.

Bierut stopped him angrily. "If you mention the Referendum as a fraud once again, we will deprive you of your immunity!"

I jumped up from the ministerial section of the chamber and shouted, "We have definite proof that it was a fraud and would be happy to reveal the full details right now."

Bierut permitted Wójcik to continue speaking but warned him again not to mention the Referendum.

Our spokesman protested that the parliamentary commission, which had been set up to draft an orderly electoral law months before, had never been permitted to operate. As a result a hasty law was now about to be rammed through the chamber. Wójcik presented a sample electoral law that had won the considered approval of the Peasant Party and that would insure the fulfillment of Yalta's demand for a "free and unfettered election." This was rejected.

Wójcik then turned his attention to the eligibility rulings of the law about to be imposed. He noted that the Communists could use it to deprive any Pole of his right to vote if the voter were accused, however unjustly, of having contact with the underground or of having "won material profit" from collaboration with the Germans during the occupation. Our spokesman

quoted the constitution, which protected the rights of all Poles to vote except those under judicial ban. Under the new law a worker who had been forced at gun point to continue laboring under the Germans could now be declared disfranchised.

Attacking the flagrant use of the word "equal" in connection with the new electoral law, Wójcik noted that the number of mandates was to be determined not by the total of the population inhabiting a given district but by the area of the district. Thus, in some districts, 20,000 votes sufficed to secure a seat in parliament, while in other districts 120,000 were needed. The electoral law arbitrarily granted the western territories a larger representation, and thus Communists could obtain a larger number of mandates in those areas where the population could more effectively be subjected to terrorism.

In the somewhat forlorn hope of providing for an honest election Wójcik demanded that all political parties be represented on the commission to supervise the elections; that members of local supervisory commissions be residents of the areas concerned; and that independent parties be granted the right to appoint trustees, or observers, in each local polling place. Wójcik called for immunity for all candidates and trustees, demanded freedom of assembly and of the press during the campaign period, and asked for heavy punishment of all those found guilty of falsifying the returns. None of his demands had any results.

On October 7, 1946, I appeared before the supreme council of the Polish Peasant Party to inform them of the grim alternatives that faced us.

"We have been asked to join the Communist electoral bloc," I said and told them of Stalin's orders to the Socialists and Communists in Moscow.

"Those who have asked us to do this make no secret of the fact that our refusal to accept threatens the Polish Peasant Party with complete liquidation. They made it plain that they had the full backing of Moscow and that the existence of opposition in Poland will no longer be tolerated.

"We know full well that in a free election the Communists would not receive 5 per cent of the votes. Thus we can entertain little hope that the elections will be free.

"However, the overwhelming majority of the people has confidence in the Polish Peasant Party. We are, as someone recently remarked, the conscience of the nation. We are the only hope, the source of moral inspiration, and the sole independent organization in the fight for rule of law, freedom of

the individual, and independence of thought. We are looked up to as a salvation from the chaos and ruthless shedding of Polish blood in fratricidal strife.

"The Polish nation that survived the German occupation now earnestly desires to express its will in a free election. The people regard the bloc as a kind of agreement among horse dealers, established to frustrate the will of the people. On the other hand, we are conscious of the responsibility to carry out the Crimea Agreement's promise of free and unfettered elections. The party does not wish to condone the violation of this Agreement by sanctioning an utter fraud."

I told the supreme council that by rebelling against the fraud we could not count on arousing much sympathy in Britain and America, where certain circles had grown impatient with what they considered our bullheadedness.

There was no hesitation within the council. It rejected the demand that we join the government bloc and agreed to run our candidates independently, even if they gained only the 10 per cent that Stalin had ruled would be our independent share.

We were coming to the end of our rope inside Poland.

Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski had ignored not only the twenty-six protests we had placed before the temporary parliament but ten additional ones that I had turned over to them personally. They had announced late in September, 1946, that because of its "obstinacy" the Polish Peasant Party would be barred from joining the government bloc. They phrased their statement to make it appear that this constituted a blow to us. The pressure on us remained unabated. Four more provincial and eight other district headquarters of the Peasant Party were demolished. All public meetings were suspended. Thirty more district organizations were dissolved. Party members were thrown off their farms or out of their jobs. Security Police invaded private meetings of the Polish Peasant Party, introduced motions to dissolve, "passed" them, and announced the dissolution in a Communist newspaper. The chief editor of the *Gazeta Ludowa* and seven of his staff were arrested. Party bulletins were suspended. Youth movement *Wici* meetings were overrun by squads of Communists, who voted to dismiss the regular officers and introduced constitutional changes that communized the groups.

Despite their announcement late in September that we had been "barred" from the bloc, Bierut and Osóbka-Morawski continued to demand of me that

I lead the Polish Peasant Party into the combination. When I again refused early in October, Bierut roared, "Join the bloc immediately, or you and your entire party will be wiped out."

I told him that it was clear that there was no longer any hope of justice within Poland. I must appeal directly to the participants of Yalta—the United States and Great Britain—for guarantees. However, I did not do this immediately. I knew that if I did, it would give the Communists an opportunity at some later date to accuse me of crying about Poland's woes to "foreign Powers." Instead, I wrote a long memorandum and sent it secretly to Stalin on October 10, 1946.¹⁰ My action deprived the Communists of an opportunity to say later that the Polish Peasant Party showed no inclination to take part in the political life of Poland; that we had appealed to the British and Americans before we appealed to the Power that constantly intervened in our internal affairs.

There was no reply to my memorandum, beyond a brief notation from Russian Ambassador Lebedev that Stalin had received it. I waited for an answer from Stalin until December, and receiving none, sent identical memoranda to the ambassadors of the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR.

In these I recalled the pledges those countries had made at Yalta, Moscow, and Potsdam, and the subsequent promises of the Provisional Government concerning the elections. I listed in considerable detail the scope of the reign of terror being visited upon Poland.

I revealed that as of December 1, 1946, 670 members of Peasant Party local executive committees, 147 members of district committees, 7 members of provincial executive committees, 22 members of the supreme council of our party, and thousands of ordinary members were being held in prison.

I enclosed examples of the tactics employed by Communists to force citizens to join bloc parties and to terrorize them into collaboration with the Security Police. I cited cases of citizens who had been deprived of their property because they were members of the party and of workers dismissed from factories and offices for the same reason. I told of illegal search of houses, thefts, and robberies committed by the Security Police during their unwarranted invasions of privacy. I revealed the means by which Communists were able to wring false testimony and confessions from innocent persons and gave examples of how Security Police, after deliberately planting weapons or



International News Photo

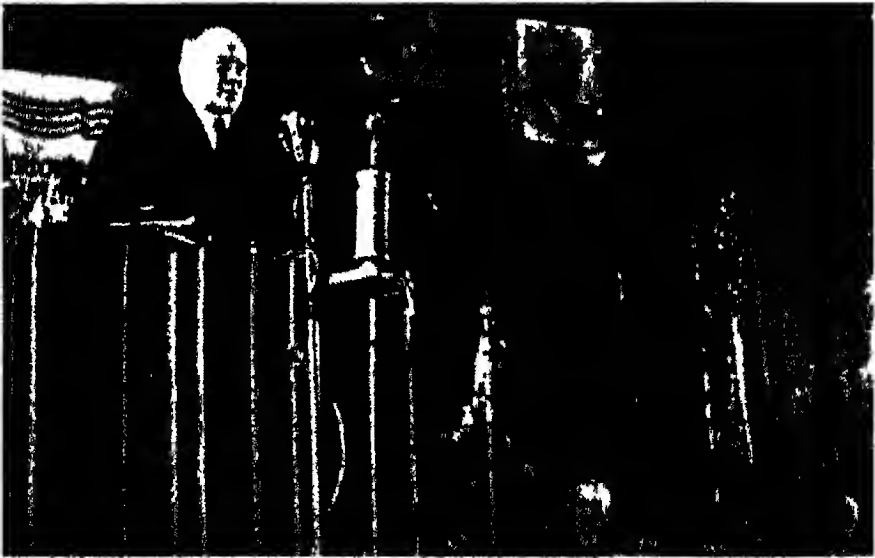
June, 1945: I return to Polish soil after a new Provisional Government is established at meetings in Moscow. The enthusiasm of the crowds angered the Communists and marked the "beginning of a death sentence that was never carried out" (page 126)



May 2, 1946: Russian dominated, Polish Security Police burned farms and villages when Poles refused to become Communists. This picture, from my own collection, is of the ruins of the village of Wawolmca, district of Pulawy, after a typical reprisal raid (page 158)



October 22, 1946: Jozef Elchliak, a member of the provincial executive committee of Mikolajczyk's Polish Peasant Party from Cracow, on the doorstep of his home after a visit from the Security Police. His crime: a speech he made at the funeral of three friends who had been murdered before him by the Communists (page 179)



International News Photo

January 20, 1946: I address a congress of the Polish Peasant Party in Warsaw. "I told the Reds that the Polish Peasant Party would boycott their proposed Referendum if the election provided by the Yalta Agreement were not held" (page 152).

illegal literature in the homes of Peasant Party members, then arrested them for possessing such contraband. I provided abundant proof that party cards had been forcibly taken from our members and that our offices had been stripped of valuable documents during illegal raids. Finally, I enclosed a list of those who had been murdered, and the shocking circumstances, and a list of those arrested without formal charges.

I forwarded copies of the protests we had sent to the Commissioner General of the election, Kazimierz Bzowski, during the previous two months, relating to frauds and violations of the law.

I concluded each 138-page dossier with a reminder to the Three Powers involved that they were "responsible for the execution of the decisions taken at Yalta."

Chapter Fourteen

FREE AND UNFETTERED

*Mechanics of the election fraud
Our candidates run the gauntlet
Communists have many fronts
The ten stricken lists
We vote in spite of hell
Counted out again*



On January 5, 1947, two weeks before the fraudulent Polish elections, the United States government delivered identical notes ³¹ to the Soviet and British governments reflecting sharply on the failure of the Provisional Government to provide an election that would be in consonance with the Yalta and Potsdam Declarations.

The notes made use of my communications to the United States Ambassador in Warsaw, but the United States government had also gathered some relevant material of its own. In the notes the United States observed that there was little likelihood of free and unfettered elections under the course pursued by the Polish Provisional Government. Because of the circumstances the United States felt compelled to remind the Polish government of its obligations to live up to the Agreements made at Potsdam and Yalta.

The USSR promptly replied that it "cannot agree with the allegations" made by the United States and that it had "no intention of intervening in

the Polish elections." It accused the Polish Peasant Party of cooperating with the criminal underground. The Provisional Government, in a reply of its own, said, "... The allegations are based on misrepresentation of facts and on groundless charges raised by antidemocratic elements in Poland."

While the American note was censored, the Russian and Polish government replies were printed everywhere.

In its concluding maneuvers to terrorize opposition to the government bloc, the Communists overlooked no form of brutality or treachery.

The actual mechanics of the election fraud, so far as its legal appearing aspect was concerned, were set up on October 16 when Bierut chose Supreme Court Justice Kasimierz Bzowski as Commissioner General of the elections. Bzowski had been won to the Communist cause during a trip to the USSR a few months before. Upon his return he declared, in a speech before a convention of attorneys in Łódź, that "the justice of Russia is the best in the world." Bzowski's deputy was Kazimierz Dobrowolski, a registered Socialist obedient to the Communist line. We had no opportunity to present candidates of our own or to protest against those put forward.

The six members of the main electoral commission included the Polish Peasant Party M.P. Stanislaw Osiecki. Each of the members was granted a deputy. Osiecki's deputy was Stanislaw Mazur, also an M.P.

Without consulting the members of the commission, Bzowski appointed chairmen of the fifty-two district electoral commissions and their fifty-two deputies. All were Communists. They promptly announced the appointment of 5,200 local electoral commission chairmen and an equal number of deputies—all Communists.

Many of those appointed were brought from distant points and installed. The Communists feared that there might be reprisals against commissioners after it had become apparent that the elections were a mockery; hence the importation of persons unknown, in most cases, to the constituents. These men had complete power to veto candidates or deprive voters of their franchise.

To complete the poisonous machinery the Communist-controlled presidiums of the national councils in the seventeen provinces of Poland now appointed three members and three deputies in each electoral district and in every local commission. The Communists easily overrode an obstacle that presented itself in Poznań province, where the Polish Peasant Party held the majority in the

provincial presidium and expelled our party members Tadeusz Nowak and Nadobnik, and our majority disappeared.

The loss of the Poznań presidium's majority was a heavy blow, for if we had been able to retain it, we would have had competent representatives on the electoral commissions in such heavily populated voting districts as Poznań, Leszno, Świebodzin, Gniezno, and Kalisz—from which eventually came thirty-seven members of the new parliament.

Three trials raged in Warsaw throughout our campaign. All had been timed to smear the Polish Peasant Party and the American and British Embassies.

The year-old case of the murder of Ścibiorek opened with a fanfare—the Communist press charged that the Polish Peasant Party itself had murdered its general secretary with the help of the American Embassy.

The facts of the case were these: Ścibiorek was murdered December 5, 1945, by the Security Police in Łódź. The order to kill him was given by Colonel Moczar, commander of the province security police and a member of the central committee of the Communist Party. Moczar then ordered the murder of the murderer himself, after it had become apparent that we had established his identity. A few months later the Security Police arrested Mme. Dmochowska, an employee of the United States Embassy, on the charge that she had attempted to "smuggle out of the country the murderers of Ścibiorek." A second charge against her was that she had hidden a revolver at the home of her mother.

Now, as a part of the preelection smear against the Polish Peasant Party, Mme. Dmochowska was placed on trial along with two discharged members of the Security Police. The two ex-policemen "confessed" that they had murdered Ścibiorek on orders from the underground. They testified that they had approached Mme. Dmochowska for aid in fleeing the country. Mme. Dmochowska was sentenced to five years in prison for "not revealing to the authorities that these men had approached her," though she had never seen either of them in her life. The men themselves were sentenced to death, but probably both are free today.

In a second trial, a member of our youth movement, *Wici*, named Baczak, and an older man, Grocholski, were accused of supplying British Ambassador Cavendish Bentinck with "secret information." Baczak was charged with giv-

ing the Ambassador details of a Polish-Soviet trade agreement, which had not been announced. Grocholski, a long-standing friend of the Ambassador, was accused of being a liaison officer between the Embassy and the underground. Both were executed.

In a third trial, which gained considerable space in the controlled press, a Home Army colonel named Rzepecki, who had succumbed to Communist pressure while in prison, took the witness stand to say that I had refused to see him or help him come out into the open after my return to Poland in 1945. He added that this was my way of ordering the underground to continue fighting against the Provisional Government. He was sentenced to prison, then released, and was named deputy director of the Scientific Institute of the army. Former Home Army men whom he betrayed while still their commander were sentenced to death. His chief at the Institute became General Berling, who had emerged from the USSR after several years of "additional training" following the so-called "disgrace" that befell him as a result of attempting to lift the siege of Warsaw in 1944.

While these trials were going on, the press was filled with stories about impending legal actions against arrested Polish Peasant Party members Bagiński, Mierzwa, and Augustyński, the latter being the editor of *Gazeta Ludowa*. The new trials, the papers said, "will involve Mikolajczyk and the entire leadership of the party."

As if this were not enough to insure the impending fraud, Bzowski then set about to make it next to impossible for the Polish Peasant Party to present its list of candidates. Under the electoral law we were provided with ten days in which to submit such lists. We had to produce signed statements from the candidates, announcing their intention to run for Parliament and details about their past activities.

Actually, we had only seven days to attend to this mass of paper work. We needed 500 names of registered voters (from two voting districts) to make legal the candidacies of those running for office on the state list. We supplied about 750 names, as we knew that a certain number were almost certain to be rejected on one pretense or another.

The Communists made certain that we would have difficulty obtaining even the signatures of Polish Peasant Party candidates on letters affirming their desire to enter the race. The Security Police arrested 48 of the 200 men

we had agreed to run. We had to appeal to the Security Police to obtain the signatures of these jailed persons. It goes without saying that we received very little cooperation.

Osiecki was taken ill shortly after his appointment to the top electoral commission, and the burden of his work fell on Mazur, who had to defend the eligibility of each of the 500 registered sponsors of our candidates. Miraculously, Mazur was successful. After meeting all the outrageous demands, our candidates were duly announced in the controlled press.

At the next meeting of Bzowski's group, it was announced that Polish Peasant Party candidates Bagiński, Mierzwa, and Zdanowski had been stricken from the state list at the request of a renegade Socialist commissioner named Motyka. Mierzwa, it was explained, had "refused to sign" when the paper was presented to him in prison. Bagiński, also serving a prison term (both he and Mierzwa had been rearrested in Poland after serving the sentences given to them by the Russian court in Moscow that tried the sixteen Polish patriots in 1945), was thrown off the list "because he was unfriendly to the Red Army during its liberation of Poland and because during the German occupation he did not take an active enough part in the fight." The same charges were lodged against Zdanowski. In addition to being complete lies in both cases, the charges were illegally lodged, for the electoral law had made no provision for such tests of fitness.

Shortly before the election the controlled press proclaimed the establishment of the Polish Peasant Party—New Liberation in the hope of confusing voters who might not be able to differentiate between this bogus organization and the old Polish Peasant Party that I headed. To add to the bewilderment Bzowski ruled that we would not be permitted to include the line "Stanisław Mikolajczyk—Chairman" under the name "Polish Peasant Party."

The spurious Polish Peasant Party—New Liberation was ostensibly headed by Bronisław Drzewiecki, a reformed Communist, but the actual leader was the party's general secretary, Tadeusz Rek. Rek had been arrested by the Russians in 1944 and sentenced to death for anti-Communist activities in Lublin. As a condition of his pardon he was ordered to sabotage the Polish Peasant Party. When we discovered what he was up to, we expelled him.

In addition to the Polish Peasant Party—New Liberation, another Communist-sponsored Peasant Party (SL) appeared on the lists. This party, which had usurped the traditional name of my own party, was run by two

Communists, Korzycki and Baranowski. It was a dutiful member of the bloc.

The bloc was headed by the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), in truth the Communist Party. The PPR leader was Gomułka. With the PPR in the bloc were the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and Democratic Party (SD). Osóbka-Morawski was chairman of the PPS, but its real leader was the Premier-to-be, Cyrankiewicz. Many of its rank-and-file members remained loyal Socialists, but Communists had long since gained control of the top offices. The Democratic Party was run by the Communist Leon Chajm, its general secretary, and vice-minister of justice.

The Christian Labor (SP) and the Polish Peasant Party—New Liberation were also members of the government bloc. In some areas, for diversionary reasons, these parties were ordered to present their candidates on a separate list. The newly formed, so-called "Catholic Progressive Party" was a complete blind for fraud. The Communists wanted to show the world that they gave independent Catholics the right to appear in parliament as nonbloc spokesmen. They built this carefully contrived, "independent" party around the prewar leader of an extreme Rightist youth movement, Piasecki. This man had been sentenced to death in 1944 by the Lublin government, then pardoned, supplied with money and newsprint, and ordered to publish what pretended to be a Catholic newspaper. The Communists gave the Catholic Progressive Party the right to present candidates in only three of the fifty-two districts.

Our Polish Peasant Party, it goes without saying, was the lone independent in the field.

The Communists were enraged that we had managed by round-the-clock work to supply the Commissioner General with the names and sponsors of our candidates on the state list. They then set about to make us miss the December 20, 1946, deadline for the presentation of district lists. Seven days before the deadline, and after Mazur had been assured that the procedure for presenting our candidates and their sponsors would be the same as in the case of the state list, the rules were arbitrarily changed. It became necessary for candidates to give full details on their parents. Sponsors (in this case too for each candidate) were required to give the official number of their voting district. But the official numbers had not at that time been released by the election commissioners. Those who failed to discover their district numbers were automatically stricken from the sponsoring lists.

More than seven thousand Polish Peasant Party members, including every member of our district and local organizations and the majority of the provincial executive committees of the party, were in jail when the new rules were put into effect. Hence, one cannot even imagine the additional work that fell upon party leaders. I can say out of personal experience that none of us at national headquarters in Warsaw slept more than two or three hours a night for days thereafter. Party members dispatched through the country to see that our candidates presented signatures and to inform their sponsors of their district numbers were often arrested before they could complete their missions. The telephone would have been a godsend to us in Warsaw in this crisis. The Communists had seen to it that all our phones were out of order.

Even with the crushing blow of the useless telephones we rebounded. Because of our inherent suspicion of Communist tactics we had alerted many substitute candidates, thousands of substitute sponsors, hundreds of substitute couriers, who carried on when those ahead of them were arrested. By December 17 the complete slates of candidates and sponsors were ready. Since I knew that only by submitting the names in the last hours before the deadline could our candidates and sponsors be saved from intimidation, I ordered the lists withheld till the eighteenth.

To make use of their immunity to arrest, we used forty of our members of parliament to deliver the lists to the fifty-two district commissions. In spite of "immunity" Bryja, Jagla, Klimczak, and Kaminski were arrested. The list Kaminski carried to Radom was taken from him in prison and destroyed. We had a copy of it, which we dispatched to Radom in time for delivery before the deadline. Nonmembers of parliament who attempted to deliver their lists on the eighteenth were arrested and the lists either destroyed or held up.

By using M.P.'s on the eighteenth and threatening to turn all this information over to foreign correspondents in Warsaw, we were able to make the deadline.

There was no time, however, to gloat over an incredibly hard job miraculously performed. District electoral commissions still had two weeks in which to announce the names of the candidates for election. That meant that the Security Police would have two weeks in which to persecute those who had now officially revealed themselves as candidates or sponsors.

In the intolerable persecutions that followed we had to contend not only with the NKVD, Security Police, People's Militia and the ORMO—the

armed bands of civilian Communists—but also with the Polish Army itself.

The army was ordered by its Chief of Staff, Russian General Korczyc to form and train defense and propaganda units for the annihilation of the rural Polish Peasant Party. The order ³² establishing the units was signed also by Colonel Zarzycki-Neugebauer, a Polish Communist who had undergone extensive training in the USSR (he signed in his capacity as a member of the army's political education board). The order was promulgated on the very day that Bierut chose to announce the date of Poland's long-awaited "free and unfettered" elections. A copy of the army's instructions was quickly delivered to me by loyal Poles who deeply resented this prostitution of our armed forces. In these instructions the Polish Peasant Party was smeared as a "front for bandits." The instructions ordered the army to proselytize the Communist cause in the most remote rural hamlets. The cost of military quarters for defense propaganda groups could be saddled upon the farmers. The army was told to study carefully the personnel and scope of the Polish Peasant Party in the rural districts and to prepare lists for the day of reckoning.

The verbal orders to the chosen commanders of the army groups were starker than the written ones. In a six-and-a-half-hour meeting at the First Regiment garrison in the Praga suburb of Warsaw on November 17, 1946, commanders were told:

"You are authorized to make arrests and executions of Peasant Party members. You must seize their party cards, and you may take other personal effects. You must at all times charge that Mikolajczyk is pro-German and a traitor. The Polish Peasant Party must be thoroughly terrorized before election time. Mass meetings must be forced to promise to vote for the bloc. It must be made apparent that the party and its supporters will be exterminated immediately after the elections."

In the written orders to the army there was mentioned a magazine called *Soldier's Word*. Printed at government expense at a prewar religious publishing house that the Communists had seized in Poznań, this publication was an illustrated magazine whose yellow cover showed a Polish army private shaking hands with a peasant. Its foreword commanded the reader to "listen to the words of the soldiers. We will tell you whom we shall choose for the Parliament and whom you should choose. . . . We soldiers helped you divide the land of the landlords. We have given you that land. We have supplied you with the Western territories where you are finding great prosperity. Great

Britain and the United States are now . . . telling the Germans that they have been mistreated. . . . British and American soldiers are marrying German girls and turning the ruling power back to the hands of Nazis. British and American judges at Nuremberg did not want to sentence the Hitlerite bandits to death. They are rebuilding, or allowing to be rebuilt, German war factories. The attitude of the USSR is just the opposite. All German factories, which did or can produce weapons, are being dismantled and sent to Russia. Russia believes in punishing Hitlerites. . . ."

The *Soldier's Word*, which the army units were ordered to hand out, detailed the "glories" of the western territories and continued: "Yet the United States and Britain want to take these lands from us. Only Russia is backing us in this case. The United States and Britain are using Mikolajczyk and the Polish Peasant Party to split our national unity and weaken us from the inside. This party is working with the criminal underground. . . . You will notice the manner in which the Party's members defend the underground. In addition, the Polish Peasant Party is defending black-marketers, the nobility, landlords, and prewar owners of factories. The Party is doing this while it is feeding you propaganda concerning freedom, independence, and prosperity. Do not believe the Peasant Party. It is bankrupt. Whoever trusts this organization . . . will quickly feel on his own skin the result of this trust. Vote for the bloc."

The illustrations of *Soldier's Word* were in the crude Russian style. There were cartoons of me as a puppet being operated by the United States and Britain, seizing money from a poor peasant and giving it to the rich, fraternizing with especially vicious-looking thugs marked "underground." In addition there were photographic reproductions of dead Poles with captions saying they had been killed by the underground and pictures of "American GI's" in more or less pornographic poses with "German girls."

The army, obeying General Korczyc's instructions, acted without pity. In Węgrów it seized our headquarters on the pretext that it had no place to use as a barracks. In Wesola, near Miechów, an officer denounced me as a "German swine and traitor," and when the peasants objected, he ordered his men to fire into the congregation, killing one man, wounding three, and dispersing the meeting. In Sobolew, near Garwolin, an officer warned all priests, teachers, and males of the area, "If you don't obey me, I'll burn the whole village and shoot hostages." In Paluga, near Kielce, an officer shot and

killed Józef Wychowaniec when he refused to answer questions during one of the framed meetings. In the Wągrowiec district, the eighteen-year-old son of one of our candidates was beaten to a bloody pulp and then displayed to the other villagers as a warning. Captain Denisov, an NKVD man in Kartuzy, publicly threatened any Pole who approached our Peasant Party headquarters with arrest and deportation to Siberia. The army confiscated peasants' bicycles, smashed their stoves, and despite the cold, scattered their bedding over the countryside.

Membership cards were confiscated in wholesale lots. In Piaseczno, near Warsaw, Major Gostyński demanded that all cards be surrendered. If members fled with their cards, he added, their wives, children and other relatives would be arrested as hostages.

In the few remaining weeks before the elections more than one hundred thousand members of the Polish Peasant Party were arrested. One hundred and thirty members were murdered. One hundred and forty-two of our candidates were kept in prison throughout the entire campaign period. One of these, Mr. Szygula, a Silesian farmer, was tortured to death in prison. So was Lewandowski, a farmer near Inowrocław. When the arrests became so numerous that there was no more room in prisons, our people were herded into fields, stripped of outer clothing, and forced to stay in the cold for forty-eight hours up to two weeks. The health of thousands was broken. Jan Troka, a candidate from Starogard, was taken to a frigid cellar, where his shoes were removed. He was forced to hold his feet in water, and they eventually froze. His family was permitted to carry him home after a long period of unconsciousness. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, a sponsor from Bogate, was arrested when he refused to withdraw his name from the list of supporters. He was beaten raw and forced to stand half naked in the Polish winter for three days in front of the Security Police station in Przewysz. He, too, was removed unconscious. Many of those kept in the fields were the women whom we had used as sponsors of our candidates on the assumption that the Communists would not molest them. To their glory, only about six per cent of the 100,000 victims of Communist violence recanted and withdrew either their candidacy or sponsorship.

These thousands incarcerated in Security Police stations or prisons underwent tortures not unlike those inflicted by the Nazis. Survivors came to our Warsaw headquarters with complete accounts and told their stories, not only

to us but to the foreign correspondents. The tortures ranged from the so-called "softening-up process" to sudden death.

"Softening-up" consisted of cross-examining a person up to a few hundred times without permitting him to sleep. Any deviation from his original answers was held against him. After hours—or even days—some persons weakened and signed "confessions."

Others were thrown into Stygian cells and kept there as long as three months, especially in the prisons in Bochnia, Wiśnicz, Cracow and Łódź.

The sadistic actions of NKVD advisers to the Security Police in Konin, Gubin, and Busko reached such proportions that I formally protested to Lebedev. Eventually, the NKVD man in Konin was replaced. He had committed the crime of allowing his crimes to come to public attention.

The bastinado process, which consisted of beating the feet of prisoners with truncheons until they fainted, was the rule in the Lobzowska prison in Cracow, the prison in Łódź, and the Security Police station in Rybnik. There is a similar torture in the NKVD manual known as "hammering the heels." The prisoner is tied to a table and a thin board is fastened to his bare heels. The board is struck repeatedly with a hammer, causing not only pain but violent retching and occasional insanity. The prison at Skarżysko-Kamienna stressed this.

At the prison in Mysłowice, Upper Silesia, and in Łódź, prisoners were placed against cell walls, whereupon guards aimed their bullets just over the victims' heads. At the prison in Skarżysko-Kamienna, as also at Łódź, prisoners were forcibly fed with salt herring to provoke a craze for water. Then water was refused them. At the old Gestapo torture house at Rzeszów, prison chambers were filled with water to chin height. Prisoners had to stand or drown.

In the Bochnia Security Police station, the standard torture was driving splinters under the nails. In the prison at Warsaw, rings were tightened around people's heads until the victims screamed and fainted. Then the victims were revived by injections of camphor and the process repeated. Others were strung up by the heels and water sprayed into nostrils. Victims who were released were forced to sign a special declaration, which read:

I, the undersigned, pledge and bind myself in relation to the Province Public Security Office in . . . to tell nobody regarding anything that I have seen or heard during my detention in prison, as also to say nothing of the persons seen by me

there or of the procedure followed during cross-examination. I will keep all this strictly secret, even from my friends and family.

Should I break the above pledge, I understand that I shall be subject to prosecution by the Polish Security Office in. . . .

I certify that the foregoing has been understood by me and in witness thereof do hereby sign my name below.

The declaration was almost identical with the one seized by our underground during the Nazi occupation.

A week before the elections, the names of our candidates in ten of the fifty-two electoral districts were stricken from the ballot. The excuse was that their sponsors, many of them still undergoing torture because of their refusal to recant, "were not valid." Then ten districts—Przemyśl, Myślenice, Chrzanów, Bielsko, Ostrowiec, Kielce, Radom, Kalisz, Przasnysz, and Łódź—had a population of 5,342,000, which comprised about a quarter of the people of Poland. From these areas, which constituted 12 per cent of the land in Poland, came seventy-six Communist bloc M.P.'s who walked in unopposed, after our slate was abolished. These areas were traditionally Peasant Party-minded.

Even the parts of these poverty-stricken regions that were populated by thousands of the prewar type of Socialist had indicated their intention to vote for our candidates, as the so-called "Socialists" who were running for parliament had been hand picked by the Communists, who controlled the top echelons of the party.

Because of this situation we had made an agreement with authentic Socialists whereupon a joint "Peoples' Workers List" of candidates comprising true Socialists and Polish Peasant Party members was put forward in the elections in the districts of Cracow, Chrzanów, Łódź, and Warsaw. Among these Socialists were the famous old Zygmunt Żuławski, long the general secretary of the Socialist trade-union movement, and his deputy Zdanowski. Socialist names, as well as our own, were stricken off the ballot in Łódź and Chrzanów. In Warsaw our candidates were permitted to remain in the contest, but the Socialists were thrown off the list and the name of our joint list erased. In Cracow the name we had selected for the welding of democratic forces was not permitted on the ballot or in campaign literature. But though deprived of formal sponsorship, Żuławski and Polish Peasant Party candidate Witaszek were elected from that district. Zdanowski, stricken off the Łódź

list, was later arrested. In February, 1948, he was returned to his home, unconscious; he died the following day. No public obituary notices could appear—in order to avoid manifestations by workers who had loved and respected him. His funeral had to be held in private.



A week before the elections Polish Peasant Party candidates were stricken from the ballot in ten of Poland's fifty-two election districts. The Communists charged that the sponsors of the stricken names "were not valid." The ten districts in which the Polish Peasant Party was thus suppressed constituted 12 per cent of Polish territory but contained virtually a quarter of the total Polish population (5,342,000 out of 24,000,000 people). Since the ten districts were traditionally Peasant Party-minded, this amounted to a wide deprivation of franchise.

The next move of the Communists to steal the election was heralded in the slogan "Vote Voluntarily for the Bloc." This was directed chiefly against groups of factory workers, office employees, miners, and tenants of housing areas. They were told that if they did not vote openly and let their Com-

munist guards plainly see how they were voting, they faced arrest and exile in Siberia. Workers who objected to this blatant violation of the Yalta, Potsdam, and Moscow Agreements—all of which specifically called for secret balloting—were dismissed from their jobs. This was an onerous punishment, since able-bodied people, if jobless, had no right to food-ration cards and living quarters. Farmers who balked at open voting, especially those in the new western territories, were evicted from their farms. The roads to Warsaw were filled with these farmers and their forlorn families returning from the west. Small dissenting businessmen, attempting to seek protection under the Moscow Agreement, which provided security for private enterprise, were charged with blackmarketing. Their properties were confiscated by a special commission set up for that purpose, and they were sent to labor camps. Priests were badgered to urge their parishioners to "vote voluntarily and openly." Millions of voters were included in various types of group tyranny; before the election they were told exactly where they must gather for their march—under guard—to the polls.

In both my preelection press conference and in a letter to Bzowski, I lodged protests against the perversion of international agreements and the Polish constitution. I pointed out that Polish Peasant Party men sent from Warsaw to gather testimony on the outrages had been arrested. Furthermore, I showed that members who had been appointed as official ballot-counting witnesses of our party had been told that they must produce letters from their local Security Police attesting to their "loyalty." I concluded both the press conference and the letter to Bzowski by threatening to have the Polish Peasant Party boycott the elections.

Bzowski answered immediately. He agreed that the breaking of secrecy was a violation of the electoral law and promised to take action on this. He also said that he would guarantee the Peasant Party representation at every counting of the ballots. This was as much satisfaction as we could hope for at this late hour, and, therefore, we said that our boycott would apply only in ten districts where our candidates had been arbitrarily rejected.

As our executive committee studied Bzowski's reply (which was censored when we attempted to print it), the Communist press suddenly issued screaming extras telling of the arrest of a member of the "criminal underground" named Lipinski. The bowl of Lipinski's confiscated pipe, so the stories ran, had yielded a note of instructions addressed to me from "underground head-

quarters." The note, it was alleged, gave me instructions to boycott the elections. This preposterous story was lengthy and apparently well documented; hence, several foreign correspondents asked me if it was true. I replied that it was a fraud and that "I wouldn't be surprised if a letter from my father soon appeared from the underground. He's been dead twenty-three years."

Before the election I was granted two ten-minute periods of radio time. All public loud-speakers throughout the country, however, were ordered shut off to keep my voice from the people. The plan for muzzling me misfired in two cases. In Radomsk the man in charge of the public speakers turned the power on full blast, stepped outside of his control booth, locked the door, and fled. When my voice began booming through the area, Security Police ran about wildly seeking to locate the man in charge. Finally they broke down the door of the control room and turned off the amplifiers—just as I concluded.

In Lublin my voice was also heard, and though what I was permitted to say had been heavily edited by the official censors, the effect was almost violent. I said, in part:

"We are building our existence with all the resources of strength, determination, and enthusiasm that characterize the Poles. We should take care not to squander the nation's energy and its material wealth, acquired in such difficult circumstances.

"This should be borne in mind particularly by those who undeservedly give themselves the credit for this tremendous national effort and who look for other alleged culprits to cover up their shortcomings and mistakes.

"We envisage our [party] role in the government as the servants of that nation which is so wonderful in both war and peace. We do not see further development in the strength and might of the administration, the militia, or the Security Police but in the continued determination and enthusiasm for work and in the release of creative national energy.

"Poland's future must be built on a planned economy, the service to the nation of the government, the determination and enthusiasm for work, intensified by a respect for human dignity, personal freedom, and the private property of the citizen, with full respect for the law and social justice. . . .

"We are certain that as far as the concepts of freedom are concerned, the country's citizens will be guided at the polls not by the vision of a future

'Great Charter of Freedom' [*Editor's note: Communist slogan*], but by the reality of the present moment. We proclaim the slogans of Christian love; we combat the waves of hatred that have swept over Poland. We wish to see hatred replaced by love of fellow man, by respect for his beliefs, his life, his health, his property. . . .

"The Polish nation, especially the Polish peasant, desires peace—peace in his home and peace in the world. But an interest in social and economic changes grows and develops only in the right conditions. People ruled by passion are motivated in their behavior by considerations of the moment, as if the morrow did not exist. They forget that the life of individuals against whom they fight may be short but that the life of the nation is eternal, and the years pass rapidly for it.

"If in spite of the methods used against us by our opponents, in spite of the lies and slander, we exist—that can only testify to our strength and the extent of our influence. In spite of charges that we wish to serve foreign powers, nobody in the country believes or will believe it.

"We will eventually triumph because Polish mothers have given us life and have taught us patriotism along with our prayers . . . because Polish fields, meadows, forests, and mountains have reared us and linked us together with love and longing . . . because the programs and ideas subscribed to by the Polish Peasant Party are the result of the acts and wishes of the truly democratic majority of the Polish nation."

By the time I had finished a crowd had gathered in the streets near the University of Lublin where the amplifiers had now been turned off. The indignation of the students reached a crest, and for an hour or two the city was on the verge of rioting. Security Police arrested a number of the youths. For punishment they drove them from the city and dumped them on lonely roads without money, hoping to keep them from last-minute campaigning in the city. The plan boomeranged. The boys walked back to Lublin and never missed an opportunity en route to spread the word of freedom and to tell the people how to vote.

The government was obliged to publish the names of all candidates on January 7, 1947. The names were not published until the twelfth; then they were posted, in most instances, in the one place where the average Pole would not think of visiting—the Security Police stations.

The government saw to it, also, that the bloc delegates' ballot number was uniformly number 3 through all voting districts. The Polish Peasant Party candidates' numbers varied. In some scattered districts they were number 1, in others number 2, in others number 4 and in the remainder number 5. This constituted an extra burden on the Warsaw headquarters, for we had to discover on our own which number applied to which district. We could not gain this information from Bzowski's office. The men we sent into the field to ascertain such data were arrested.

We had been permitted under the electoral law to issue campaign literature. We also had to supply our own ballots. When we attempted to print literature and ballots in Warsaw, our printing shops were raided, our equipment was smashed, and our employees arrested. Mailed packages of ballots were purposely misrouted and returned after the election. The cars we needed to distribute leaflets and ballots were confiscated "to fight the criminal underground." In the end we were forced to rely on boys and girls to distribute our literature and ballots. Many of the youngsters were arrested and beaten en route to their destination, their material seized and destroyed. But some—boys and girls familiar with such tactics, for, after all, they had lived under the Nazis—got through and made their deliveries.

Near the end of the campaign, the Communist line was to tell millions of voters that they must dismiss all thoughts that the United States and Great Britain would step in and control the election at the last moment. In this, regrettably enough, they told the truth. We knew by then that the British and Americans would make no move at this late date. Those Powers were fully aware that any suggestion they might make would be sternly rejected by Russia, and neither wished for any loss of face.

On January 18, 1947, the day before the great mockery of democracy, I handed my second note to the Big Three Ambassadors. In this I listed all depredations against the people since my note of December 18, 1946. I reviewed the contents of the new note at a press conference and added:

"Under these circumstances the electoral contest is conducted not by two competing parties but by a government arrayed against a gigantic majority of the nation, particularly against the Polish Peasant Party—the visible real power of this national majority. The Polish elections are . . . being conducted by the apparatus of Security Police. . . . That apparatus organizes a methodical . . . destruction of the Polish Peasant Party. In this struggle the Polish

Peasant Party faces not only the police-administrative organization but also the army." And I went on to point out that an army propagandist had said, "There is no Polish constitution. Today we rule, and he who is against us, we shall destroy." "This," I said, "is a characteristic example of the whole shape of Polish political conditions. . . . Premier Osóbka-Morawski has stated repeatedly in open talks, 'The Government cannot and will not allow the elections to be lost.'"

To the Ambassadors, I sent examples of additional crimes committed during the second part of December and first part of January, 1947. I informed them that a total of 149 Polish Peasant Party candidates were now in prison and that 1,962 Polish Peasant Party executives were under arrest, when the total of arrested members was already over one hundred thousand.

None of my revelations to the Ambassadors and to the free press was permitted to be published in *Gazeta Ludowa*. Even the obituaries of our dead were censored, as well as our last appeal to the people to "Vote according to your conscience."

In the last twenty-four hours before the polls opened, the Communists delivered what they believed would be the ultimate blow to our chances. They flooded the country with thousands of telegrams to Peasant Party officials and members. The wires were identical:

MIKOLAJCZYK KILLED LAST NIGHT IN PLANE ACCIDENT

—*Gen. Secy., Polish Peasant Party*

We managed to overcome this, however, and in the remaining hours of our pre-election ordeal completed the job of undoing a Communist plot, which, had it succeeded, might have resulted in enormous bloodshed.

We had discovered not long before that the Reds had printed countless leaflets to be distributed on the day before the election. Each leaflet said: "Polish Peasant Party people! You are fighting until the hour of the election. On the day after the election, we start our open fight." It was signed WIN—the signature of the underground organization opposing the Communist rule of Poland.

The army units had extensive lists of our people who were to be murdered the day after the election. They were to be shot on pretense that they were in contact with the underground that was supposedly about to emerge into the open.

I was able to expose this plot to the foreign correspondents in time. I made certain that the Communists knew I was familiar with the plan by inviting a certain correspondent who could be counted on to report to them immediately. He did, and the Communists forthwith called off the plan.

Sunday, January 19, 1947, will forever remain a black day in Polish history. Yet there was glory and hope and stirring valor mixed with the galling story of our official downfall as a democracy.

The millions who were ordered to vote openly gathered at their factories, offices, and other appointed places, and with band music in the air were marched by armed guards to their polling places. In Warsaw we did not worry too much about them. We were content that a host of them would find ways and means of overcoming the intimidation. They would find ways of voting as their consciences dictated and would know thereafter, even in the face of the harder days to come, that they had in this way struck a blow for freedom.

They were commanded to hold their voting slips—all number 3 (bloc)—high over their heads as they stood in the long queues in order that their guards might see. But many things happened. Hundreds of thousands of these courageous people had concealed ballots with Polish, Peasant Party numbers on them, and as they approached the ballot boxes, they managed to crumple the number 3 slips and insert slips of their own choice into the envelopes. The timing of the marches on the polling places went awry, and in many places the queues grew so long that the guards lost control. Thousands of voters fled, as if by signal, and could not be caught and dragged back into line. They came back later in the day and, without supervision, voted as they pleased.

At 1 P.M. this had become a nation-wide tactic of those who wished to be free; henceforth general orders went out from Communist headquarters in Warsaw to separate all number 3 voters from the others and permit them only to enter the polling places first. This plan worked for a time, but the people soon found ways of frustrating it. The number 3 queues began to fill up with thousands of persons who, attesting that they planned to vote for the bloc, actually voted otherwise when once inside.

The presence of foreign correspondents was troublesome to the Communists. Security Police guards were appointed to follow newspapermen

around, and polling places visited by the correspondents were instructed to remove armed persons from near the ballot boxes to give the appearance of "free and unfettered" voting. One correspondent in Kielce, who managed to duck his Security Police guard, was quickly arrested, held for six hours, and then released with apologies. No correspondents were permitted to witness the tabulation of ballots.

I cast my own vote in a polling place on Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw. I stood in a queue for two hours, while Communists marched past and spat on me. Then one of my friends called several correspondents. When they appeared with a cameraman, the Communists faded away, the door of the polling place opened, and the line began to move. In some areas, where the Polish Peasant Party vote ran heavy, the ballot boxes were closed hours in advance of the legal closing time.

Except in extreme cases, non-Communist members of official groups obliged to supervise the counting of the votes were dismissed when the polls closed. The Communist commissioners had their rigid instructions. For Stalin's benefit alone they must first make an actual count of the ballots. Then they must burn all but a prearranged number of Polish Peasant Party slips and substitute bloc slips in their place.

The Polish Peasant Party was allowed thirty-six witnesses at the slip counting in 5,200 polling places. Wincenty Bryja, our representative in one of the Warsaw polls, was arrested as he followed the Communist tabulators carrying the ballot box down a corridor to the counting room. He was held for fifteen minutes, then told he could go on to the counting room. When he arrived, he instantly accused the Communists of substituting a new ballot box whose slips were predominantly marked number 3. When they scoffed at this, he informed them that during the long day at the polls he had unobtrusively drawn a cross on the legitimate box with the stub of a pencil concealed in his hand. The ballot box that now lay before him was unmarked.

Another Polish Peasant Party witness, Madame Osiejowa, a member of parliament, was permitted to follow the box into a Warsaw district's counting room. Before the box was opened, the Communists began an obviously fake argument and fist fight. In the confusion one of them knocked Madame Osiejowa unconscious with a butt in the stomach. She recovered a half-hour later, and insisted on returning to her duty. By then the ballots had all been counted. They were, without variation, brand new slips, substituted in place

of any paper that looked as if it had been carried for hours before being cast.

Even after all the intimidation the Polish Peasant Party gained officially recognized majorities of from 65 to 85 per cent in the thirty-six polling places where our representatives had been permitted to watch the count. In Gniezno, one of the three districts in which I personally ran for a seat in the parliament, the Polish Peasant Party gained 96 per cent of the votes cast. The over-all majority rung up by our party candidates throughout the country—a figure that included the extermination of our chances in ten districts—was 74 per cent. This the Communists were forced to tell Stalin. Terror, murders, and intimidation had failed to break the will of our people.

However, these were the figures for the fifty-two districts that the government released on January 22, 1947 (and which the *Gazeta Ludowa* was forced to print):

Total votes cast	11,413,618 *
Government bloc	327 seats
Polish Peasant Party	24 seats
Catholic Labor Party	10 seats
PSL-New Liberation Party	7 seats
Others	4 seats

* Of a total electorate of 12,701,056.

Six days later the government announced the result of voting for the so-called "state lists" and said that the final results would be 394 seats for the government bloc, 28 for the Polish Peasant Party, 12 for the Christian Labor Party, 7 for the Polish Peasant Party-New Liberation, and 3 seats for the Catholic Progressive Party.

We were given seven days to file our protests with the Commissioner General. To back up our protests we had to scour the country once again in face of continuous arrests to get the facts. Once more we completed the tremendous task and were able to present fifty-two district protests and another one, written in general terms, which painted a complete picture of the fraud. We were able to quote the exact outcome of the balloting in many districts from figures obtained from the actual counts. Our fifty-third protest demanded that Bzowski declare the entire election invalid. Bzowski was obliged by law to submit this protest to the supreme court within seven days after its receipt. He withheld it for months. Instead, the protests went to the Security Police.

The men who had delivered protests or subscribed to them were arrested, cruelly beaten, and ordered to withdraw the accusations. Many who refused still remain in prison or are living out what little is left of their lives in forced-labor camps.

I turned over detailed accounts of the frauds to the British and United States governments. The United States was the first to reply. Secretary of State George C. Marshall's note said, in part:

Reports received from the U.S. Embassy in Poland confirmed the fears which this Government had expressed that the election would not be free. These reports were corroborated by the general tenor of dispatches from foreign correspondents in Poland. It is clear that the Provisional Government did not confine itself to the suppression of the so called 'underground' but employed widespread measures of coercion and intimidation against democratic elements which were loyal to Poland although not partisans of the Government Bloc.

In these circumstances, the U.S. Government cannot consider that the provisions of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements have been fulfilled. . . .

The British protest was similar in tone and was expanded in a speech in the House of Commons, on February 3, 1947, by Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Mayhew.

"The powers of the Polish Provisional Government were used to reduce to a minimum the vote of those opposed to the Government Bloc," said Mayhew. "Opposition lists of candidates in areas covered by twenty-two per cent of the electorate were completely suppressed. Candidates' and voters' names were removed from the lists, candidates were arrested, and many members of the armed forces and others were made to vote openly. Other forms of suppression were used." Mayhew added that the British government could not accept the elections as fulfillment of the pledges given by the Polish Provisional Government to the British, United States, and Soviet governments. "Therefore," said Mayhew, it is to be "assumed that these elections were not a true reflection of the will of the Polish people."

Whatever the end of the election farce, I must stress that the balloting proved the great political maturity and sincere attachment to democratic ideals of the Polish nation. This is contrary to assertions often put forward in an attempt to explain and justify the electoral abuses perpetrated behind the Iron Curtain.

Polish citizens wanted to express their will legally through the polling

booth and not by means of revolvers and assaults. These ordinary people, accustomed to German terror, were ready to take all the hardships of attempted intimidation for the right to cast their votes according to conscience and political creed. Peasant Party members stood up in spite of visits by police who arrested them and their wives and sons and daughters. They stood up even when deprived of their workshops or their farms. They braved false accusations of being in touch with underground gangs or of rendering aid to foreign intelligence entirely unknown to them. They knew that witnesses could always be found to accuse them, that they might be sentenced to death or imprisonment for many years, and that all their property might be confiscated. They were well aware that their families might be left without homes and without means of livelihood. All these hazards could have been avoided simply by leaving the party and making a declaration condemning everything they believed and were proud of. They did not quit under fire. Can such people really be considered politically immature and not sufficiently prepared for democracy?

I am proud to belong to a nation that during the war knew how to die for freedom and in peace knows how to fight legally under such terrifying conditions for the freedom of man. Could those in the west who appease their consciences or try to deny the Soviet terror pass an examination in democracy as well as my people did in Poland? The wonderful resilience, the patience, and the political maturity of my fellow Poles made me feel that I must hold out as long as humanly possible despite all difficulties and dangers.

Chapter Fifteen

SOVIETIZATION

*We resign from the cabinet but remain
in parliament*

*The new constitution is Communist
Communists get key posts*

The standard of living goes down

*The economy is nationalized . . . and
pauperized*



THE three Polish Peasant Party members of the old cabinet resigned on the day following the government's release of the election returns. I called on Bierut immediately, however, to assure him that our party—though now plainly faced with annihilation—would continue to fight for a free nation.

I officially informed him that we had resigned in protest against the blatantly fixed elections and promised that, so long as we lasted, we would bring to bear every legal means of defeating the spurious new parliament. I stressed especially the fact that we did not consider the new parliament had any authority to change the basic laws of the land.

In the name of the actual majority that had given us its votes of confidence, I called upon Bierut to release all persons illegally arrested before the election, to reprieve all those under death sentence, and to return to Poland the 40,000

members of the Home Army who had been arrested and sent to Russian prisons in 1945.

I asked for a reopening of the whole repatriation question. More than a million Poles still remained east of the Curzon line, including many who had not been able to leave the USSR since first being taken there in 1939. All repatriation machinery had been stopped, the official reason being that the job was completed. But the truth of the matter was that the Russians had decided that these people were too anticommunistic to be sent back to Poland.

I told Bierut that he and his like had deeply shocked the nation with their planned terrorism; that his Communist group was responsible for the greatest wave of anti-Russian feeling in the history of the country; that his illegal use of the army as a weapon against the Polish Peasant Party had caused the people to recoil in disgust from an organization it had traditionally respected. I suggested that he, and the others involved, would one day pay the penalty for breaking every international agreement to which they had subscribed.

Bierut was more or less complaisant, as he was in the first flush of his tainted victory and he knew that the obedient new parliament soon would rubber-stamp him as President for a seven-year term. He did not have me evicted from his office then and there. Instead he said, "I'll try to smooth out all these things."

Most certainly, however, this was not his plan, nor the plan of those above him. The actual plan called for the speeding up of the extermination of all opposition in Poland's political, social, economical, and educational fields. An adjunct to the actual plan was the complete control of Polish youth. The Reds had found the adult Pole difficult. More attention must now be paid to the young.

The preposterous new parliament met for the first time on February 4, 1947. Our twenty-eight members, including myself, were present. We attended because the parliament remained our last platform, the last medium through which we could speak to the country and the world.

We knew that no news accounts that were even faintly critical of the government could ever again be printed in *Gazeta Ludowa*, but we held to a diminishing hope that perhaps some of our parliamentary speeches might be approved for publication.

"We came here," I said during my continuously interrupted and jeered-at speech at the opening session of parliament, "because, despite the cruel intimidation brought to bear upon it, the Polish nation has shown by its attitude

. . . the political maturity of its people. We represent those people! You represent only that armed handful that sent you to these seats- -the Security Police. . . . We feel free and fully representative of the people. You have only won the election. We have won a great moral victory.

"This gathering, which calls itself a parliament, was brought into being by a fraudulent election, not by the will of the people. . . . This group thus has no right to introduce legislation that will affect the fundamental rights of the citizens. You have no moral right to change the constitution. Our entire effort will be directed toward making the life of this gathering as short as possible.

"Because we cannot accept you as a legally elected body, we cannot take part in the election of the presidium. If by some odd chance one of our members was elected to that body, we would be placed in the position of accepting the fraud on which this gathering bases its presence here."

As best I could, in view of the roars of derision, I described how and why the Polish Peasant Party had joined the Government of National Unity. I explained that we remained with it until its end solely because we considered it a duty as servants of the people. I charged the defunct government with breaking all domestic and international pledges and told Bierut and his followers that I awaited the day of atonement. Along with the other M.P.'s I had been supplied with a draft of the new oath of office that the new President would take. Picking it up, I read aloud. It was a paraphrase of older Polish oaths, but all mention of God had been deleted.

"During the campaign you printed the picture of the Blessed Virgin on your leaflets," I reminded the Communists. "You distributed among the people certain pro-Bloc literature bearing the signatures of priests, some of whom died two years ago. But in this new oath you suddenly reveal your true nature by eliminating all mention of God. May I then ask to whom the new President will be swearing?"

My speech at the first session of the new parliament was heavily censored in the official record. But the Communists themselves mentioned a change in the oath. The change had been made, the record said, at the suggestion of the three Progressive Catholic M.P.'s. This proved, so the controlled press said, that the parliament was a democratic organization. Hadn't the will of 3 members been recognized by the remainder of the 444?

On February 5, the second day of Parliament, Bierut was elected President by a vote of 408 to 25.

Bierut's acceptance speech was wildly acclaimed. One can understand why:

"I accept this appointment as an order to represent the will of the Polish people," the man said. "With my conscience as my guide, I declare that I will give all my strength to the task of serving the nation. . . . We have created a new life in our country. . . . We must forgive those who did not join in the work of rehabilitation, which has been progressing since our return to Poland. We must ask others to return to Poland as quickly as possible to speed up this work. We must open new schools, print new books . . . and unite around the highest officials of our country."

The next step of the Communists was to saddle Poland with what came to be known as the "Small Constitution," adopted on February 20, 1947.

It killed the Constitution of 1921 and officially established the Soviet system of government in Poland. The Small Constitution was announced to the world press as interim law, which would stand until the constitution itself could be rewritten. It still remains the rigid law of the land.

The Small Constitution created a Supreme Soviet Council, which in Poland goes under the name of the "Council of State." This Council is made up of the President, the speaker, the three deputy speakers, and three others chosen by the parliament. It controls the budget, the judicial system, the right to initiate legislation, the right to approve laws made by the government when parliament is not sitting, the size of appropriations for army and police, the right to declare war or install martial law, the right to create special courts and commissions of an arbitrary type, and significantly, the right to declare itself superior to parliamentary supervision.

We attacked this Council furiously before it came to the vote, but all we gained was an empty promise that parliament would follow a so-called "declaration of the rights of the people" when it got around to the task of writing the new constitution that was to supersede the Small Constitution.

Our heated attacks brought down on us the wrath of a Communist M.P. named Edward Ochab.

"You will be wiped out in Poland as the Mensheviks [Socialists who participated in the Russian revolution and were later liquidated] were wiped out!" he cried.

This statement was censored from the official record the next day but hardly because of any reason comprehensible to a free nation. The Russian Ambassador Lebedev happened to be in parliament that day as a spectator.

It was he who ordered the passage stricken out, for it was too early to announce a purge, which the Reds had already scheduled.

The venerable Zygmunt Żuławski rose to his feet to deliver an unforgettable speech on the day the Council of State became the supergovernment of Poland.

"It is twelve years since I last mounted this rostrum," the sick old fighter for human rights declared, scorning those who shouted derision at him. "For the first time I now take part, as an independent Socialist, in the debate on the declaration of the 'new' government, which . . . represents the continuation of the same political thought that was revealed in Lublin.

"Were it not for the ruins which surround me; were it not for the absence of my old comrades-in-arms, Barlicki, Niedziałkowski, Czapniński, Lieberman, Piotrowski, Dubois, Ziemięcki, and others; were it not for the knowledge that in the meantime a monstrous storm had passed over our heads, I would say that nothing had changed here.

"It is the same chamber, the same compact majority, drunk with power and victory, the same ideas, propagated today by the democratic bloc—according to which 'forces of Polish democracy took on themselves all responsibility before the nation'—the same commonplace slogans about 'everything creative and healthy in the nation having joined forces within the democratic bloc,' the same proud boasts about the achievements of the government in the field of Poland's construction and reconstruction.

". . . I was appalled when I learned of Premier Osóbka-Morawski's declaration at Cracow University to the effect that the government must win because there had never been a case of someone holding power to lose elections. I very well recall a number of cases in which the governments were defeated at the polls. Prime Minister Moraczewski in 1919 and Piłsudski in 1928 lost their elections; Republicans lost in America despite the fact that they were in power, the nationalist French government lost in favor of the People's Front; Chancellor von Papen lost in favor of Hitler; and now, recently, Churchill lost in favor of the Labor Party.

"It is only the totalitarian governments that cannot lose at the polls—because they terrorize the electorate. That is what happened in Italy and in Germany. Your way of organizing trade unions, for instance, does not differ from the manner in which Mr. Ley under Hitler organized German trade unions."

From the government's side of the chamber a huge Russian General, Pop-

ławski, who had been "elected" as a representative of the government's Peasant Party, jumped to his feet.

"Shame on you!" he thundered. "How dare you compare us Poles with Hitler!"

That was too much for me. I jumped up, too, and said, "Sit down, General. You haven't even got the right to be here. And before you make another speech in this chamber, learn to speak Polish!"

Mr. Żuławski continued with his reference to Germany and Italy.

"In the parliaments of those nations the governments had an overwhelming majority, regardless of the opinion and the will of the nation.

"I do not want to invoke any obligations, whether those of Yalta, Moscow, or Potsdam, because I hold that every election must be free, honest, and clean—otherwise there is no need to hold it at all and to create the fiction of a 'directed' or a 'people's' democracy."

Żuławski went on to cite examples of coercion and fraud in the election.

"I was not allowed to publish even one single electoral appeal," Żuławski continued. "And what was done to my old friend, Zdanowski? Like myself, he wanted to run as an independent candidate. During the occupation he had a miraculously narrow escape, by slipping out of the office at the last moment. For this the Gestapo arrested his wife. Yet this man was accused in the national electoral commission of collaboration with the Germans by no other than a former member of the WRN [the initials by which the Socialist Party was known during the underground fight against Germany]. And the commission ruled that since the leadership of the WRN had 'opposed the armed struggle against the occupying Power,' it must deprive Zdanowski of his right to stand for parliament.

"You have won.

"I have declined in all conscience to participate in this victory, although I have been invited to share it. I preferred to put forward my own independent list, although I knew that it would be defeated. But I could not bring myself to associate with the very thing that all my life I have fought against. . . ."

The speaker soon pounded his gavel. "Your time is up!" he shouted.

Żuławski looked at him wearily.

"I am just finishing," he said. "I said once in Moscow, during a Kremlin banquet and in the presence of Mr. Stalin, that I sincerely wished for friend-

ship with the Soviet Union. I must say with regret that this friendship is not being helped by statements to the effect that Polish reaction, both legal and illegal, did its utmost to win the elections, but that the nation, conscious of its aims, would not let itself be terrorized.

"Just think! Mikolajczyk and I are supposed to represent Polish reaction!

"Besmirch the good name of Mikolajczyk, even destroy the Polish Peasant Party, and still Mikolajczyk's name will remain in the soul of the peasants—this greatest stratum of our nation. It will remain a symbol, in the same way as Bojko's and Witos's names are symbols. Mikolajczyk may fall under the blows, but . . . supported by the Polish Peasant Party and the peasants, he saved the honor of our nation.

"As for me, I want to defend socialism and its purity, and I want to be a living reproach to all those who, despite their promises, obligations, words of honor, and even convictions, could not resist the temptation to participate in power."

Żuławski's burning words were riddled by the censors when we tried to publish them in *Gazeta Ludowa*. Thus, it became our duty, during the remaining days of that first session of parliament, to repeat each day passages of speeches made the day before and censored. I knew it would have been suicidal at this time to go openly to the foreign correspondents with our troubles. But they were still permitted to attend parliament, and I knew that by repeating censored phrases something of the truth about Poland would appear in dispatches to outside free newspapers.

Censorship of the official record became so bold that Mr. Hochfeld, one of the wavering Socialist Party M.P.'s, demurred. The Communists in the chamber immediately called for a secret caucus with the Socialists. They remained behind locked doors for an hour. When they returned to the chamber, Hochfeld was the first to speak. White-faced and shaken, he said he was withdrawing his earlier complaint. It was the death knell of the Socialist Party in the nation. Later Hochfeld was dismissed from the executive committee of his party.

We hammered away heavily for the amnesty and succeeded in altering for the better a decree that released all political prisoners serving sentences of less than five years. Those with longer sentences had their prison terms cut in half. Since the latter constituted the great bulk of the persons in prison, the decree didn't exactly empty the jails. The Communists, we soon dis-

covered, had agreed to the release of those serving less than five years only because all Polish jails were overcrowded, and they needed cell space for new prisoners. We wanted the amnesty to include those members of the Home Army imprisoned in Russia, but we never succeeded in repatriating more than one-fifth of these.

When it became apparent that the parliament would consent to reducing all death sentences to fifteen years imprisonment, Radkiewicz ordered wholesale executions before the appointed hours. In one province twenty-four men were scheduled for quick death. They were taken to a nearby forest under heavy guard. A lieutenant of Security Police put revolver bullets through the brains of twelve of the men. The twelfth victim, killed at very close range, caused the lieutenant to grow hysterical. Blood had leaped like twin fountains from the murdered man's eyes. The lieutenant wandered around the scene of horror like a man in a dream, crying "What will happen to me now? . . . What will happen to me now?" The twelve who remained alive stood there with chins in the air, saying to him, "You are not a Pole. You are but an agent of the Soviet. Long live Poland!"

He ran a hand over his sick head, then saw the cold eyes of the guards looking at him. He straightened up and one after the other murdered the remaining twelve. The last sound in that hideous business, aside from the roar of the revolver, was "Long Live Poland!"

The Polish Peasant Party M.P.'s dissented on one section of the amnesty order. We demanded that the crime of falsifying the election should be exempt from the statute of limitations. Our motion was quickly, even nervously, defeated.

The Polish government announced the line-up of its cabinet to the world on February 7, 1947.³⁸ Even the free press of Britain and America took note of the "coalition" and the fact that of the twenty-four places assigned eight had gone to Socialists, only five to Communists, five to the government's Peasant Party, three to Democrats, two to Christian Laborites, and one to a nonparty man.

In more discerning quarters, however, it was noted that the five announced Communist members held the reins of government. Gomułka, the Vice-premier and Minister for Western Territories, controlled all administrative power in half of the country. Security Minister Radkiewicz controlled the police. The Communist Minister for Industry, Minc, was in charge of the



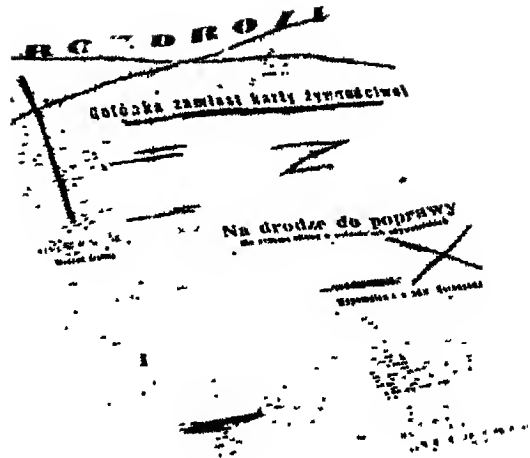
International News Photo

February 26, 1947 Stalin chats with Józef Cyrankiewicz, general secretary of the Communist infiltrated, Polish Socialist Party. After the rigged Polish elections, Cyrankiewicz was named Prime Minister of the new government (page 211)



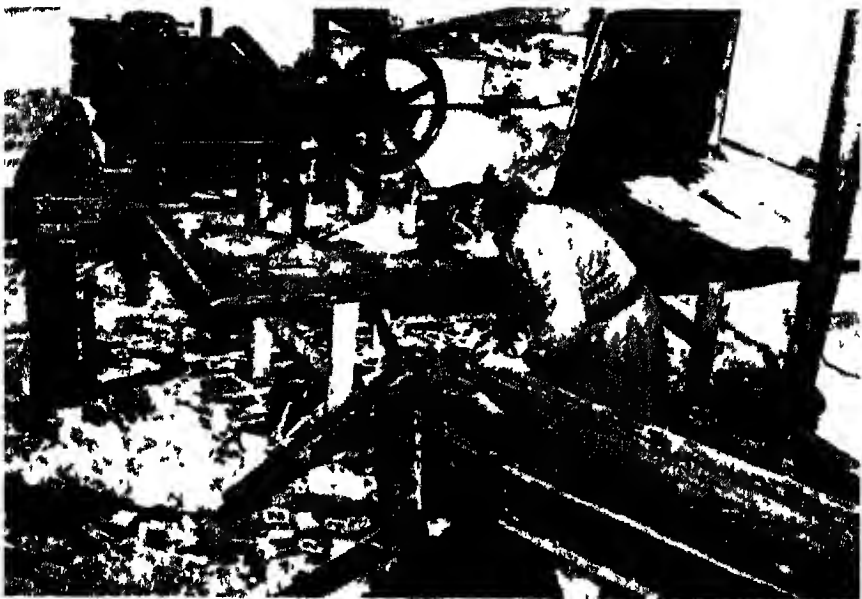
International News Photo

May, 1946: Political meeting at Radom, province of Kielce. Peasant Party crowds surrounded my car (lower right). After the elections of January, 1947, such meetings were banned by the Communists (page 158).



International News Photo

January, 1947: What happened when the Communist censor got through with an issue of *Gazeta Ludowa*, the Polish Peasant Party newspaper (page 197).



Acme Photo

January, 1947: The presses of the Polish Peasant Party in Warsaw were wrecked a few days before the elections. This effectively kept the party from printing campaign literature and posters in time to bid for votes (page 196).

economic life of the nation. Skrzyszewski controlled the future of the country through his Ministry of Education, and Modzelewski could use his Ministry of Foreign Affairs to align Poland's diplomacy with Russia's.

Communist control did not end there. Rola-Żymierski, head of national defense, was a Communist behind his nonparty façade, and other affiliations masked other Communist personalities. The government's Peasant Party soon lost the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs to Professor Szymanowski, a Communist who had worked both in Russia and the United States. Osóbka-Morawski, Socialist stooge for Stalin, controlled the half of the interior that did not go to Gomułka. The authority of the Socialist Minister of Finance was quickly appropriated by Minc. Świątkowski, the Socialist Minister of Justice, soon took his orders from his Vice-ministers Chajn, a Communist, and Rek, an agent of the Red Police. The Socialist Foreign Trade and Navigation Minister Grosfeld's post was soon consumed by Minc's office. Vice-ministers were predominantly Communist, and openly so.

Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz and Minister of Labor and Social Welfare Rusinek, both professed Socialists, had been abjectly pro-Communist for the past few years. Both were graduates of the Oświęcim concentration camp where, as in other camps, the Nazis had used long-incarcerated Communists as spies and trustees in charge of newer prisoners. The Communists became a secret aristocracy that ran the camps. A Spanish Communist in Oświęcim first saved Cyrankiewicz and Rusinek, then put them in charge of registering, as *Stubenschreiber*, the countless thousands of victims who were sent there for cremation or work. The usual Nazi order was to burn 800 of each 1,000 sent to the camp. Cyrankiewicz and Rusinek, taking orders from the Spanish Communist, often changed the names so that certain prisoners who had been assigned to work were thrown in the ovens, and certain others destined for cremation were saved.

When he emerged from Oświęcim after the Red Army swept past the camp, Rusinek promptly showed a spirit of independence that displeased his liberators. He was denounced by a Communist named Roman Zambrowski as a collaborator with the Germans. Since Zambrowski had the grisly falsified Oświęcim death-or-work ledgers in his possession, Rusinek quickly became a fervent supporter of communism. For the same reason Cyrankiewicz bowed with equal alacrity. They dared not do otherwise, for if they had, they could easily have been blackmailed as "Hitlerite hangmen."

Before the close of its first session, the parliament yielded an additional power of attorney to the cabinet to act in its name whenever parliament was not in session. We of the Polish Peasant Party railed at this, for it made parliament little more than a rubber stamp. Our protests were in vain.

Because of the Yalta pledge we had earnestly hoped that either the United States or Britain would use the information we had supplied, and their own as well, as a basis for bringing our plight to the attention of the United Nations. But America did not act, and Britain's gesture toward Poland was both a surprise and a shock. Four men who pretended to be "the cream of the Polish judiciary" were invited to tour England. The men invited were Judge Bzowski, who had helped steal the election; Wacław Barcikowski, who helped corrupt the Referendum; Vice-minister of Justice Chajm, who was teaching men to prosecute political prisoners in a course that took only six weeks to complete; and a lawyer named Tomorowicz, who was in charge of falsifying the vote of the people of Warsaw.

Embittered Poles made a grim joke of the invitations. "England," they said, "must need advice on how to falsify an election."

During the first six months of their complete control of Poland, the Communists exterminated practically all the independent political, economic, and social life of the nation.

On May 1, 1947, Gomułka took advantage of the Marxist holiday to tell the Socialist Party's remaining dissidents that they must give up their political identities and merge with the Communists.

"The time is right to merge the two great workers' parties, the Communist and Socialist," he told his audience. "Common meetings have been called throughout the country, and the first item on each agenda will be the merger."

His words aroused surprise even among those Socialists who willingly wore the Communist yoke, for they had not been told in advance. Throughout the country there was manifest indignation. When protests were lodged at the joint meetings, the dissenters were arrested. In a short time the Communists had more than thirty thousand Socialists in prison, and the horrors visited upon them were akin to those directed against the Peasant Party members before the election. Top Socialists in the government, explaining the arrests, weakly explained, "Too many opportunists and reactionaries have joined our party in recent months. The party must be purified." And with that they gave

their blessing to the terror. Gomulka gave the independent Socialists until November, 1947, to strip themselves of all vestiges of independent thought and merge.

He did not have to worry about Poland's other parties. They were little more than Communist cells, permitted to exist only to delude the somewhat uninterested Western world into thinking that Poland was ruled by a coalition.

The first meeting of the parliament had dictated the political future of Poland. The second, which began in April, 1947, accomplished the economic sovietization of the country.

The willing puppets confirmed the earlier excesses of the Lublin government and dutifully added some extra weight to Poland's saddle.

The Lublin Poles had instituted military courts, had nationalized basic industries, and perverted the old democratic dreams of land reform by a program of their own. Most importantly, they had introduced new currency and seized the personal savings of the Polish people, forcing each citizen to turn his savings into government banks. The great bulk of this money was never returned. An arbitrary price was set on the new government zlotys, which currency was printed in Russia, and each person was permitted to exchange what he had for five hundred new zlotys—the equivalent of five dollars. The people had no way of knowing how much of the new money had been printed. The engraving plates remained in Russia.

The process of hammering all of Poland down to a lower standard of living than it had known in generations was aided by the burning of houses—and in some instances, entire villages. It was accelerated by Russian seizure of Polish factories and other assets as "war booty." From that part of Poland which had been incorporated into the Reich, the Reds removed two synthetic oil plants, near Oświęcim and Gliwice. They also denuded the new western territory of its railroads and factories. In Danzig one day I watched three floating docks being loaded with Polish machinery and supplies and then towed off. I have already mentioned our more than one hundred million dollars a year loss in coal revenues.

The economic bondage into which the people of Poland were flung soon became even more sinister than their political enslavement. The new economic laws were installed with a fanfare of propaganda, which emphasized their "progressive" nature, and ignored the earlier pledges that Poland's economic structure would be based on the harmonious cooperation of three systems—

state-owned property, the cooperative movement, and private enterprise. The peasant holdings, small industries, trade, and artisanship were supposed to be part of the latter.

All pledges, including Stalin's personal promise to me that Poland's economy would never be communized, went by the board in April. Seven crushing economic laws turned the people of Poland into a nation of serfs for a state which, in turn, paid homage and tribute to Russia. This froze the independence in the hearts of the people as the strictly political pressure had been unable to do.

The first of these laws was ostensibly aimed at fighting high prices and exorbitant profits. Under this pretext a special commission was formed, headed by Zambrowski, vice-clairman of the Council of State. This commission fixed prices of all commodities. It assumed the right to confiscate any private business, sell the confiscated effects, impose prison sentences up to five years and fines of five million zlotys for "profiteering." It also had the right to sentence offending shopkeepers and other private owners to two years of slave labor without trial.

This special commission controlled the production and distribution of state-owned goods, fixed the profit margins of those private firms to which it sold goods, and permitted state-owned shops to undersell private shops, yet realize greater profits. A private shoeshop owner, for example, had to appeal to this special commission for state-produced shoe supplies. He was told how many pairs of shoes he would be permitted to buy at what price, and his selling price was fixed. The bill for the shoes was presented in advance of shipment, and he was forced to settle at once. The state, however, sent its first shipments of shoes to state-owned shoe stores, which were in competition with the private owner, and delivered the private owner's shoes months later. They usually turned out to be "seconds" of poor quality. The private dealer's tied-up money realized no interest during this period. His profits were limited to from 5 to 10 per cent. The allowed profits of state-owned stores of this type averaged 17 per cent.

The second law affected business taxes, and another special commission was set up with quantities of controllers to carry out the variable provisions of the law. This special commission ruled on the standards of living that each Pole might carry. It ruled that no owner of a private business was permitted

to realize a profit. All income above and beyond a fixed norm must be turned over to the state.

All decisions were left to individual controllers. A man might produce his books and ledgers to prove that he was doing a certain amount of business each year, but if the agent of the state decided otherwise, either out of spite or ignorance, all moneys beyond the norm he set were confiscated and the victim was banished to a labor camp.

The third law gave Minc full powers to issue or withhold licenses for the operation of all private business and industry. This power also included the licensing of all technicians seeking employment in private enterprise. A graduate electrical engineer, for instance, could not open a business or accept a job without a license to do so. His diploma meant nothing without the license.

With this power invested in him Minc then began opening state-owned stores, shops, and businesses in competition with their private counterparts throughout the country. When state stores failed to draw business away from established private firms, the private firms were closed.

The fourth law was a tax law directed against farmers. It raised all land taxes 300 per cent and introduced confiscatory tax levels for larger farm holdings. A special commission and gangs of controllers naturally went with this new law to fight the kulaks.

Farmers with larger holdings were ordered to pay taxes in grain, a plan that deprived the farmer not only of his personal needs and the needs of his stock but also kept him from selling his surplus in the markets of his choice. The grain was shipped to Russia. Russia then sold it back to Poland at Chicago grain market prices. The government sold it in turn to such private sources as could afford it or delivered it at cheap prices to its own agencies. The farmers originally deprived of the grain were naturally compelled to buy it back at stiff prices in order to continue operation of the farms. One can perhaps sense their rage when they repeatedly read in the controlled press that Russia was generously "providing grain for needy Poland."

The same controlled press did everything in its power to ignore UNRRA aid, for any attention drawn to that aid might cause the people to know that the United States and Britain—whom they were being instructed to hate—were supplying most UNRRA supplies. UNRRA, while it lasted, was stu-

pendous. Its dollar value of \$474,500,000 was five times as much as the government budget for the period. It amounted to $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds of aid per family per day. It meant the equivalent of about a dollar a day—by Polish standards—for every man, woman, and child in the country. Without UNRRA and the unflagging determination of the Polish people to rebuild even a country dominated by a despotic alien rule, Poland would have perished.

Yet when UNRRA was forced to suspend operations, the Red press of Poland charged the United States with attempting to "make slaves of our people through starvation." All articles denounced the United States for sending aid for the rehabilitation of Germany and "for starving the Poles."

The fifth law was passed to kill Poland's traditionally democratic cooperatives. As the reader knows, the purpose of a cooperative is to increase the buying power of small consumers, who band together to produce the goods they need and thus reduce distribution and consumer costs. The Communists declared, however, that the need for cooperatives had disappeared from Poland with the installation of "justice" and the extermination of "capitalistic monopolies and profiteers." The cooperative stores, the Communists decreed, must distribute state-produced goods at fixed prices. Security Police arrested all cooperatives' managers, employees, and shareholders who raised open objections, and Communists were installed in all managerial positions. The entire cooperative movement thus became a tool of the state, its promised independence obliterated. All financial resources, carefully built through the years, were thereafter exploited.

The sixth law destroyed labor unions in Poland. It declared that since Poland was now a people's democracy, the traditional function of the unions to protect members against exploitation by management had disappeared. It went on to state that industry, now almost completely state owned, belonged to the workers. The workers now had the "voluntary" duty of increasing production for their own good and for the general good of the country. Strikes were declared unconstitutional, as there were no longer any capitalistic bosses to strike against. Strikes thereafter must be considered acts of sabotage against the state. The law and its apologists pointed out that wages would necessarily be low for a considerable period of time because of the previous years of capitalistic exploitation of Polish industry. However, the worker was assured that his children would find a richer life. The worker was "frozen"

in his job by a clause that installed political commissars in each plant. A worker could resign, but if he did, he would not be permitted to find work of a similar nature in other parts of the country. Each political commissar in each factory was supplied with the names of all those who had resigned. It was further established that any person who left his work forfeited his right to a food-ration card. He also forfeited his right to be housed.

Workers quickly discovered what awaited them if they struck. In Łódź, shortly after the labor law went into effect, a military tribunal sentenced a textile worker named Tadeusz Borowiec to ten years in prison for agitating a strike in a state-owned plant. The strike—in protest against rotten soup served to the workers during their so-called “free meal”—spread to seventeen other factories and plants owned by the state. Borowiec was held responsible for a loss of 29,146 work hours.

The seventh law set up a special commission in charge of housing. The commission was given the right to evict all “undesirables” from their homes or rooms and the right to decide just who and how many must live in the available living space. Rents were frozen at prewar levels, but the change in the value of a zloty had been enormous, and this worked vast hardship for landlords. It was possible in prewar Poland to rent a room for two hundred zlotys a month. When the law went into effect, the zloty had so declined in value that two hundred of them would purchase only a pack of cigarettes. Landlords were permitted to take no profits, but the law demanded that they make all repairs to their property. They no longer were given the right to choose tenants. The tenants simply appeared at their establishments, armed with licenses to move in. Ownership, burdened with these tremendous responsibilities, became a mocking formality.

One might naturally expect that under this type of economic yoke the state-owned industries would show a large profit. Such industries and businesses derived capital from the government, from state-owned banks, and insurance companies. The state was not required to pay for industries it absorbed, nor for land on which it built new plants. Private enterprises that were seized with all equipment and stores were enlarged or reconstructed with funds provided by a special state budget. State-owned industries took raw materials from government reserves without payment. They appropriated much of the 50-million-dollar loan of machinery and other stores that had

been sent to Poland by the United States. They seized all machinery and gear that UNRRA had delivered. Material produced at slave-labor wages was often sold at high prices to private enterprise.

Despite all these advantages the Polish government showed heavy deficits in the state-owned industries during 1947.

Its estimated income from all sources through that year was, in round figures, 174 billion zlotys. Nationalized industries, which should have produced the bulk of this when one considers the compulsions, provided only 38 billion zlotys. Of this 38 billion, some 14 billion had been wrung from the sugar industry. Farmers were forced to sell their beets at ruinous prices; the state-owned refineries sold the final product at exorbitant prices. Ludicrously, the state got more income from cigarettes, spirits, and matches—47 billion zlotys—than it derived from an industry forced to operate on totalitarian principles. As a matter of fact, even the somewhat proudly announced 38 billion income from industry was a fiction. Opposed to it was a deficit of 84 billion zlotys, which represented the subsidy from the state budget for specially priced food sold to workers and employees of state-owned industries.

Another deficit of nearly 4 billion zlotys was listed officially as funds "covering losses in certain industries." Coal and steel, which should have provided great profits, were among the heavy contributors to the deficit.

The 1947 budget provided 2 billion zlotys for the support of government-bloc political activities and the payment of salaries to the Communist leaders and deputies within the bloc parties. In addition to this sponsorship money, obedient politicians were granted special concessions for the purchase of their needs and luxuries. They could, for instance, buy an American Chevrolet for 600,000 zlotys, though the cost to a less favored person was 1,200,000—assuming that he had permission to buy the car.

The greatest drain on the budget, by far, was that of the army and the Security Police. The army was given 25 billion zlotys for 1947 and the Security Police 17 billion, a total of nearly 43 billion for the job of policing the people. Actually, the Security Police budget did not include the figure for operating its military units. That figure was placed in the army totals, a bit of book-keeping that kept from the eyes of the Western world the terrible fact that the Security Police, operated by the NKVD, was the foremost robber of Polish income. Together, the army and Security Police budgets amounted to 28 per cent of the total national budget.

The 1947 Polish budget made note of the fact that there were 80,000 teachers on the public pay roll. But it neglected to add that there were 90,000 members of the Security Police (out of a total of 300,000 names on the public pay roll) and that these 90,000 did not include those classified in the military units of the organization and the ORMÓ militia. The full personnel of the Security Police totaled 230,000 men, in addition to 120,000 members of the ORMÓ—both armed and subsidized at public expense.

By the end of 1947 about one in every three openly acknowledged government employees was engaged in police work.

The final effect of the laws passed by the April session of the parliament was this:

The state now controlled every "right" of the worker to work, eat, and be housed, as well as the size of his starvation wages.

It controlled the right of private enterprise to exist, regulated the amount of business and profits, and controlled the power of confiscation.

It introduced harsh licensing into all professional, technological, and artistic fields. A teacher could not find employment unless appointed after a series of "loyalty" tests. Actors, for instance, could work only for state-owned theaters or film companies. Journalists must assure the state of their loyalty before being accepted for positions on newspapers. Novels and special articles must be submitted for censorship. Writers must also appeal to the government for paper.

The state controlled the farmer through taxation, seizure of his products, and the compulsion to seek licenses before buying or selling property. The imposition of Soviet-style land reforms added an extra burden to the farmer, though the Communist press hailed the agrarian changes as an example of inherent interest in the welfare of the peasant.

Before the war Poland's arable land amounted to 18,500,000 hectares (about 46 million acres). There were 3,196,000 farms, 82 per cent of them owned by small farmers. Of the 3,196,000 farms, only 14,700 were larger than 50 hectares. Some 2,611,900 farms had fewer than 10 hectares.

The Lublin government seized 3,111,745 hectares from the larger landowners. This figure included 980,451 hectares of forest. That left 2,131,284 hectares for land reform. Of this latter figure, 465,614 hectares were turned over to schools of agriculture, experimental work, and Communist Self-help peasant organizations. From the day the land began to be divided until May

12, 1947, some 221,354 existing farms received 390,455 hectares of new land, and 157,967 new farms were created out of 734,562 hectares.

That was the extent of Communist land reform on prewar Polish territory. The new farms averaged three hectares each, or as the expression of the farmers had it, "Too small to live on but too large to permit us to die immediately." The actual reform was very minor. The agricultural structure of old Poland remained about the same. Only the number of small farms increased. The standard of living on all farms was beaten down. New and old farmers were unable to buy tools and were virtually forbidden to build new structures. The state controlled all machine sales and building supplies—and had other uses for them.

In the new western territory, the Communists refused to break up the large *Junker* estates. They ruled that these must remain as they were for the eventual establishment on them of "grain factories." Today the state is operating 4,200 of these "factories." Each is identical with the Russian type of sovkhoz, where the farmer is only an employee of the state. In this same area of Poland, the Red Army continues to administer about 800,000 hectares in the sovkhoz manner.

Other prewar *Junker* estates were not divided. Polish families repatriated from the east were placed on these estates, which are run as cooperatives, and told that this land would be divided among them within five years. One can be sure, however, that the progress of communization within Poland will cause the government to break its promise. Each estate eventually will become identical to the Russian kolkhoz, or collective.

As for the independent farmers in the west, their doom has been sealed by a long-range Communist plan that has forced sometimes as many as five families to live on a farm normally capable of supporting only one.

The Communists are certain that their over-all campaign against the independent farmer, both in old Poland and in the west, will eventually force these people to ask for collectivization in order to survive. This has already been done in Communist Bulgaria, where farmers have "voluntarily" adopted the collective system. In Poland the propaganda of the Communist youth movement looks in this direction.

In short, the land-reform policy, along with the economic exploitation and the confiscatory phases of the tax program directed against the kulaks, is aimed at destroying all self-sufficient farms. This is the ultimate proof that

Polish agriculture can face no future except complete sovietization as long as the Communists remain in power. The plan is to hammer down the average standard of living, kill all self-confidence, morale, and independence.

For further confirmation of the sovietization of Poland's entire economy one needs only to turn to an article in the May, 1947, issue of *New Ways* (*Nowe Drogi*). It was written by the master architect of Poland's economic slavery, Minc:

Marxism must be regarded as the highest level of Socialization. Under it, all means of production must be State-owned. The highest level of socialization and its only real aim is the nationalization of all means of production.

We will convert all remaining capitalism in Poland to "State Capitalism." The industry and trade which now includes some socialism we will turn into real socialism. Only then will we be able to say we have finished the building of the People's Democratic Poland.

Chapter Sixteen

THE TIGHTENING VISE

I am "in league with the underground"

The sinister plot

Communists seize the youth

The Church is attacked

Erosion of the soul



THE political and economic bondage of Poland was now a hard reality. We who still maintained our right to speak in parliament attacked the treachery with all our remaining force. One after another, the Peasant Party's M.P.'s spoke in the final hours of the second session of the parliament. We pulled no punches.

In my own remarks I slashed at the new economic laws and the methods by which they and the political purges would be visited upon the people.

"You believe that your terror and propaganda have annihilated us," I said to the government side of the chamber. "But you have annihilated only individuals. You will never be able to wipe out the huge ideological movement that is so violently opposed to you and your methods.

"By your methods you have thwarted the reconstruction of Poland and have done much to crush the creative spirit of the people. You have brought only chaos and tears to the Polish people. I demand of you—especially you who still are, and feel like, Poles—cease this terror. Turn hatred into love, intolerance into freedom, your so-called "people's democracy" into a true democracy. I warn you to remember that you are not only responsible to the

judgment of history, you are responsible to the people of Poland today. One day you will have to pay for your crimes."

I was opposed, in rebuttal, by General Paszkiewicz, who had been "elected," as the expression had it, by the government's Peasant Party. He was a man who had held a desk job with the Polish forces in the Middle East and in England. After the war he returned to Poland and sought a position under the Communists.

He volunteered to take over the command of an infantry division in eastern Poland. This division worked closely with Red Army units stationed on Polish soil under the command of Russian General Kiniewicz. The joint operations were ostensibly directed against "bandits." The true purpose of General Paszkiewicz's command was not to fight lawlessness but to support it by attacks on all Poles who continued to believe in the independence of Poland and the pledges of the Allies.

General Paszkiewicz launched into a vitriolic attack on me personally, calling me a "foreign spy" and "an operative of the criminal underground, which is composed of Polish Peasant Party men and Germans." He added that he had seen evidence in Białystok of this alleged union of our party members with Germans—"with my own eyes."

Our members rose as a man in the chamber to protest against this provocation, and Speaker Kowalski ordered Bańczyk and several others removed. I made no scene at this time, for I had detected an interesting, if sinister, new note in the tone of the rebuttal. What had been inclined to be half-said, or hinted at, was now coming into the open. This kind of attack could only mean that my days were now plainly numbered.

When the General ran out of vilifications, I rose and made what were destined to be my last remarks in the chamber.

"This man who has just spoken has no moral right to open his mouth in this chamber," I said. "Let me acquaint you with some of his background. In 1937 when I was leading the peasant strike against the totalitarian regime of Beck, he commanded army units and arrested and maltreated peasants on the charge that they were Communists.

"Today this person pretends to represent the Polish peasant. He spoke of Białystok. I call to your attention what he, in union with forces of the Red Army, has done to the peasants of that area. He destroyed entire villages, sentenced to death without trial a great number of innocent Poles. On one

occasion he arrested a number of men who had served as officers of our glorious Home Army and had distinguished themselves in the immortal fight against the Nazi invaders. He ordered them shot on the spot. They spat at him as the guns of the murderers were aimed at them, and they shouted a reminder to him that it was appropriate that he should bear the same name as the Russian general who butchered so many of our people in the nineteenth century.

"This man accuses me of collaborating with Germans in the formation of an underground. That is an affront to all Poles now fighting for their freedom. He repeats this charge even though he is sitting now on a side of the chamber that abounds with Germans, former Gestapo men, and Hitler agents, now being used by the Communists to crush the Polish people."

In a drowning, hostile roar, and above Speaker Kowalski's demands that I desist, I read off a long list of names of former Nazis now serving not only as officials of the Communist Party but also as Security Police officers.

Then I sat down and knew that this was the beginning of the end. I had burned my last bridge behind me. I knew it. Black clouds completely and ominously overshadowed our little group.

In addition to reviewing in my own mind the events of the second parliament, I pondered over the other pressures brought to bear on freedom in the country and the manner in which Poland was being ruthlessly prepared for World War III—which Russia intends to wage against civilization.

That world war, for it can be called nothing but that, was announced in Poland by Radkiewicz in April, 1947, at a secret meeting of Security Police officers and Communist officials in Łódź.

Before he spoke, it was a criminal offense for a Pole to mention the possibility of World War III. Thereafter, Poles—as well as others living behind the Iron Curtain—were encouraged to speak of the coming conflict. A new line of propaganda had been ordered by Moscow.

"There will be a war with the west," Radkiewicz told the assembly. "It will be won by the USSR. Of that there must be no doubt. First, we must indoctrinate the people of Poland for that war.

"They must be told that American capitalists want to rule the world. They must be told that these capitalists fear the economic collapse of the United States and that in order to avert such catastrophe they have forced their gov-

ernment into a policy of world-wide imperialism so that a war will result.

"In Poland we must quickly prepare for that war by liquidating the Peasant Party and the remnants of independent thought in the Socialist Party. We trust the top Socialist officials. They are our men. But the dissenting rank and file must be crushed. Polish youth must be prepared and trained."

Sitting there in the insulting clamor of the chamber, I recalled that important steps had already been taken to seize the nation's youth.

In January, 1947, the government had established what it called a "Special Commission for Discipline," to operate in Polish high schools and universities. Principals of high schools were promptly deprived of their traditional rights to expel those who failed in their studies or created havoc. The special commission assumed the right of expulsion and directed it chiefly against those students who refused to join the Communist youth movement.

The state became the only administrative force in the universities; freedom and independence of all Polish universities was killed.

All high school students wishing to continue their studies in universities were sent before a special board, appointed by Skrzyszewski, Minister of Education, for a test of their political knowledge. No teacher was allowed to judge his own students. To pass the tests a student had to be adept at denouncing me. Such questions as "If you saw both Stalin and Mikolajczyk drowning, and you were a good swimmer, which one would you save?" were asked of them. They were forced to hail Stalin as "the greatest man in the world" and Bierut as "the greatest man in Poland."

Many boys and girls who successfully passed these "examinations" came to me or wrote to me to assure me that the questions were ludicrous and that they had professed an abiding interest in communism only in order to be able to continue their studies. I could not share their laughter. They had had to lie to further themselves. There would have to be other lies at other times, and each lie would be easier to utter than the last.

Students who were more independent financially and desired to go to universities of their choice found mountainous obstacles in their way. It was no longer possible to find lodging in a university town without a permit from the special commission on housing. Students had to submit to loyalty tests of various types. They had to lie to get living quarters.

By March, 1947, the Communists had already secured a grim hold on the Polish peasant youth. The Reds replaced the existing system of agricultural

education with a system of their own. A Russian colonel was placed in the Ministry of Agriculture. He began to conscript all Polish peasant youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one into military units, which posed as groups being instructed in both military and agricultural training.

Out of this grew a broader program called "Service to the Country," which became the law of the land. Under this program all boys and girls from all classes of life in Poland are similarly trained. Some boys are taken from their schools and homes and placed in special work units, similar to Hitler's *Todt* organization. All are politically trained by Communist instructors and physically prepared for military service. When the young men have completed preliminary training, they are conscripted into the army until they are twenty-three. Girls trained under the Service to the Country program are also instructed in the use of arms. They are schooled to become military police and to engage in infantry maneuvers—just as are their Soviet sisters.

To these millions of young people—cannon fodder for the next war—are added adults, up to the age of thirty, who for one reason or another have had no previous military training.

The youth of Poland has been given new books. Some of the new history books begin with the reign of Peter the Great. Even the propaganda-ridden textbooks ordered for the schools by the Provisional Government have been replaced by ones of stronger Soviet tones.

Not all of Poland's youth is getting the new education. There were 600,000 Polish children of school age who were not attending school in 1947. More than 3,600 schools were without teachers. Of the country's 90,344 schools, 11,282 were of the one-room variety with a single teacher for as many as 400 students of all ages. In spite of the lack of facilities a large proportion of the educational budget went in 1947 to the establishment of loyalty boards and for the payment of instructors in military and political tactics.

During the same year the Communists prepared for the merging of all youth organizations into one Communist youth movement. For the interim period they placed Communists in charge of those organizations, which were permitted to retain their traditional names in order to make an impression on the Western Powers.

The young as well as the old in Poland have been hit by the open fight on the Catholic Church. This fight had been carried on *sub rosa* during the early days of the Communist visitations. Priests had been placed on trial and sometimes sentenced to death as *saboteurs*, but such steps were taken gingerly,

and little or no publicity was permitted to prevent alarming the people.

Censorship of Catholic documents and dogma soon became the rule. For instance, we were not permitted to print in the election-eye issue of *Gazeta Ludowa* all of a pastoral letter in which the bishops of Poland commented on the coming election. Stricken out were such passages as:

"Catholics may not belong to organizations . . . whose principles conflict with Christian teaching or whose deeds and functions aim in reality at upsetting Christian ethics. . . . Catholics may vote only for such persons, electoral lists, and programs that are not opposed to Catholic teaching and morality. . . . Modern states wish to be omnipotent. And although some of them consider themselves democratic, they move in their aspirations so far that they do not recognize any other force beside themselves, not even the voice of the community nor any moral authority—not even the authority of God."

More than ninety per cent of the people of Poland are Catholic, and the Church has naturally played a leading role in the life of the land. Two priests, Fathers Wawrzyniak and Bliziński, brought the cooperative movement to Poland at the end of the nineteenth century. The cooperatives, embracing nearly every aspect of Polish life, developed Polish agriculture, created Polish industry, and bought more land and settled more farmers than the heavily subsidized German colonization commission was able to do during the long years of German control before World War I. The aim of the priests, who were the cooperative pioneers, was to gain economic independence for Poles as a prelude to political independence. When Bismarck attempted to stamp out Polish culture by forbidding even the priests to deliver their sermons in Polish, the Church stood by the people and enabled them to win their *Kulturkampf*. During World War II the Church was extremely active in the fight for Polish independence. The bravery of priests during the occupation by the Nazis was unquestioned. Many were murdered. Many served with distinction in the underground and the Home Army. Cardinal Sapieha courageously resisted Governor General Frank in Cracow, took an active role in all relief work, and became deeply loved by the people.

Manifestations of Catholic faith grew as the Communist terror increased in Poland after 1945. More than a million and a half pilgrims gathered at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin in Częstochowa late in the summer of 1946, but news of such expressions of faith was censored. Both Polish cardinals, Hlond and Sapieha, were attacked in the controlled press, and their names were dragged into trials of alleged members of the criminal underground. When

a delegation of Catholic educators called on Communist Minister of Education Skrzyszewski to complain, Skrzyszewski cried out:

"The youth must be educated not only from a government point of view, but they must become Communists as well. I am aiming for this, and I will do this. If I don't succeed I will call for the help of the Security Police."

Catholic periodicals were often refused licenses to operate. Those that were permitted to publish saw their circulations clipped by the refusal of the government to provide ample newsprint. Unsigned letters to the editor defaming the Church appeared more frequently in the Communist press.

Cardinal Hlond finally spoke through a memorable pastoral letter, which was read from all the pulpits in Poland. In the frankest terms the Cardinal accused the Communists of introducing godless education. He warned them of the disasters that had followed Hitler's atheistic training of the German youth. He charged them with demoralizing the spirit of the people and Polish family life by expelling workers from their jobs for political reasons and said flatly that additional working hours were being arranged in certain areas in order to make workers miss Sunday Mass.

The entire pastoral letter was censored from *Gazeta Ludowa*. When we telephoned the censor, he barked:

"For the time being I cannot stop the reading of such letters in the churches. But I'm sure the time will come when I'll be able to do something about that."

Within the next three days, every priest in Poland who had read the Cardinal's letter was approached by Security Police officers. Each was ordered to make a statement on three points: (1) Is there a Hitler school in your parish? (2) Who in your parish has been expelled from work for political reasons and by whom? (3) Who has been forced to work on Sundays during services in your parish?

The queries had been artfully framed. The first question was expected to bring an obvious negative answer, which could be used by the Communists as proof that the priests had repudiated the Cardinal. Cardinal Hlond denounced godless education. He did not say that the Polish youth were educated in Hitler schools. By means of the second question, the Reds hoped to gain the names of discharged workers, after which they would order those who had fired them to state that the men and women had been dismissed for incompetence, not for political reasons. Military courts could then sentence the priests for "spreading false rumors." The third question was phrased in general terms, whereas the Cardinal had been specific. It was true that people

employed in Warsaw were ordered to perform extra work on Sunday mornings. It had been customary to release them each Sunday morning at eleven. When the Communists noticed that many went immediately to mass, the Sunday workday was extended to two in the afternoon.

The Communists planned to publish only the replies of those priests with parishes in regions where there was no extra Sunday work.

The questioned priests all refused to answer. They refused, most of them said, because they did not feel it appropriate to comment on a pastoral message. Thus, the Communist plan to blame the Church and the Cardinal failed.

The propaganda against Cardinal Hlond and the Church in general was soon stepped up, and millions of Poles faced the bleak prospect of being deprived of the last source of comfort in the country—the last haven in which they could hear the love of man and God preached, not the hatred of both.

It was at this time that the raging question in Poland became: "How long will it take them to communize us completely?"

If I had been asked that question, I would have replied that I felt certain Poland would never give up the fight for freedom, even if that fight meant the death of the nation. But the spiritual aspect of the oppressed soul and the length of its life baffled and amazed me then—and still does.

If I had been asked the question: "How long can a nation survive the erosion of its soul?" I would have spoken of the professor who, at Communist command, must denounce his colleagues in public, even though he knows his colleagues are innocent. I would have spoken of the child who is taught to spy on his parents; of the student who must lie to further his education, corrupt as that education is; of the worker who must lie to keep his job and support his family; of the teacher who must teach what he does not believe. I would have thought of the member of an independent political party, forced to denounce his beliefs and his leaders. I would have thought of democratic political leaders who were arrested, tortured, forced to confess that they—who had defended freedom—were traitors to their people and to the nation.

The spirit somehow lives on; the flame is covered but does not die. In Soviet Russia the people must lie to live. They dare not look eye to eye for fear of betraying their feelings. For the eyes are the mirror of the soul. Poland will live as long as the Poles can look at one another. These gaunt Polish eyes speak what their lips cannot utter.

Chapter Seventeen

THE FINAL STRAWS

The secret government

Russians pull the strings

The armed might of the police

Life under terror

I learn of my "coming" death

I decide to flee



IN 1948 Poland's secret government is headed by a man few Poles have ever seen—the Russian General Malinov. His name has never appeared in a Polish newspaper. He has never made a public appearance in Poland. He towers above all other officials—public or secret—including Russian Ambassador Lebedev and Lebedev's own master in the Embassy, an NKVD man named Jakovlev, who operates under the title of First Secretary.

Below Malinov in the secret government of Poland are, in the order named, Jakób Berman, Roman Zambrowski, Hilary Minc, Władysław Gomułka, Bolesław Bierut, and Józef Cyrankiewicz.

Berman's official position is Vice-minister in the office of the Prime Minister. He controls Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, the Foreign Office, and all political parties, as well as censorship, broadcasting, press, and publicity. He has his personal representative in every political party, in every trade

union, agricultural organization, and youth organization. Through his wife he also runs the Ministry of Health. On his desk are direct phones to the Kremlin offices of Zhdanov, chief of the Politburo and to Molotov.

He is a soft-spoken man, but his temper is tempestuous when aroused. He received his political education in Moscow at the People's Military Political Academy of the Red Army. His best-known work is a treatise entitled "The Communist Party and the Problems of War," written in 1928. In this he attempts to prove the validity of Stalin's politico-military doctrine and the errors and heresies of the trends advocated by Stalin's opponents.

Jakób Berman was arrested in Poland in 1937 and sentenced to three years for conspiracy against the state. His trial revealed that he was a high-ranking Comintern agent. Released, he went back to Russia and stayed there through the war.

Roman Zambrowski's official post is that of Deputy Speaker and member of the Council of State. In addition he heads up the political education of the citizen militia, the ORMÓ. As chief of the special commission for prosecution of embezzlement, fraud and economic sabotage, he is authorized to send any Pole to a labor camp for two years without trial and to confiscate the accused's property. He may lodge fines up to five million zlotys, cancel all licenses within private industry, all ration and housing rights within the worker class. Like most others in the secret government, he is a Russian citizen and was completely unknown in Poland before his arrival there in 1945. His phone wires reach direct to Zhdanov. His real name is Nusbaum. He served in the Red Army from 1941 to 1943 and was chief of the board of political education in Berling's division in Russia.

Hilary Minc, Minister of Trade and Industry, chairman of the economic committee of the cabinet, which includes the central planning board, rules the entire economic life of Poland. He takes his orders from G. M. Malenkov, the commissar of Russia's own economy. Minc is a well-educated man who studied law and economics in France. He was deported from that country in 1928 as an undesirable alien. He had been active in Communist ranks there. He continued his work in communistic circles in Poland, and when the Red Army entered eastern Poland in September, 1939, he immediately revealed himself to its political officials and was given a chair at Samarkand University. He remained in Russia throughout the war.

Władysław Gomułka, next in authority in the secret government, is, in

addition to being Vice-premier and Minister for the western territories, the secretary general of the Communist Party in Poland. Millions in the western areas, "Gomułka's Kingdom," exist only on sufferance of this partly deranged man. He was born in Poland, worked as a plumber in the oil refineries in southern Poland, became the Communist agent in the Union of Chemical Workers, and underwent imprisonment for conspiring against the state. When the Red Army entered Poland he moved into the USSR. His wife's uncle was Unschlicht, a prominent political commissar in Russia. Gomułka's insane rages, when Poles did not immediately bow to his will, have become well known. As is normal for his kind, he lives in mortal fear of reprisal. When he moves around Warsaw he goes in a nine-car entourage in order that no one will know in which car he is riding.

Bierut I have dealt with earlier. As President, he controls the Council of State, which sits atop the parliament and rules all people's councils down to that of the lowest village of the land.

Józef Cyrankiewicz, who is portrayed to the world as the Socialist Prime Minister of Poland, is the lowest member of the secret government. This government meets once a week with General Malinov to receive new orders from Russia and to consider proposals that reach it from the Polish Politburo just below. The supergovernment then funnels its decisions down to the cabinet, parliament, national councils, workers organizations, cooperatives, agricultural associations, and youth movements.

In 1948 the Polish Politburo is made up of Gomułka, Berman, Zambrowski, Minc, Bierut, Radkiewicz, Marian Spychalski, political chief of the army; Edward Ochab, in charge of discipline within the Communist Party; Zygmunt Modzelewski, the Foreign Minister; Zenon Kliszko, Communist parliamentary whip; Stefan Jędrzychowski, economic controller of the Communist Party and former ambassador to France, Minister of Foreign Trade and (during the war) a member of the Supreme Soviet Council; and General Aleksander Zawadzki, Governor of Katowice and former Red Army general. Besides these, there are two Politburo deputies. The first deputy is a man named Goldberg who calls himself Borejsza. He is chairman of "The Reader" (*Czytelnik*), under which all newspapers and publishing houses operate. (Borejsza is blood brother to Różanski, who is a colonel in the Security Police and chief of its political department.) The other deputy is Jęzzy Albrecht, an M.P. in control of the education of Poland's youth.

The next echelon of power in Poland is the thirty-man central committee

of the Communist Party, composed in the main of the men mentioned above. Its various subcommittees correspond to every publicly announced Polish ministry and organization. The subcommittees send suggestions to the central committee itself, which in turn delivers them to the Politburo, which submits them to the secret government, which gives the orders. One of the subcommittees of the central committee of the Communist Party controls special murders not in the realm of regular Security Police murdering.

The head of the Security Police is Radkiewicz, born in a village in the Pripet Marshes. He is in constant contact with Lavrenty Beria, chief of the Russian secret police. Radkiewicz became a Communist thug at an early age, went to Russia in 1932, and became an NKVD officer. He returned to Poland with the Lublin Committee as the announced head of the force that was to turn Poland into a police state. He now commands 230,000 men in the Security Police. Of these, 90,000 are stationed in offices throughout the country. Of the remainder, 100,000 are in barracks as formal military units. The other 40,000 are the plainclothesmen of the force. Radkiewicz is also in charge of the ORMO's 120,000 armed civilians—"the additional armed hand of the People's Democracy."

The Security Police are mostly Russian-trained. Many are Russian citizens who, though dressed in Polish uniforms, cannot speak the Polish language. Some are men of Polish descent whose parents were among the 1,800,000 Poles forced to remain in Russia after World War I. Others were picked for special training from among the 1,500,000 Poles banished to Russia in 1939. The country's worst criminal elements have supplied others; persons chosen for sadist tendencies or eager to join because of a psychopathic lust for a revolver's power and the authority of a uniform. The remainder of the Security Police is made up largely of youths of Polish extraction who lived in France and became Communists there. Many of these do not speak Polish and as a consequence, are used mostly as prison guards. Even some Polish-speaking Germans, formerly members of Hitler's party and S.S. battalions; are serving with the Polish Security Police.

It is not possible for a man to quit his position in the Security Police. There is a saying—all too real—"From the Security Police one can move only to his grave."

All commanding officers of the military units of the Security Police are Russian, as are the more important officers of the main Security Police.

ganization. To permeate the whole outfit thoroughly, Russian advisers are assigned to each Security Police district commander. The advisers wear Red Army uniforms. From the top level of the Security Police—basically Russian—come many of the prosecutors and judges of the military courts.

The Polish Army is ostensibly commanded by Marshal Michał Rola-Żymierski, but he remains a showpiece. He makes a good functionary because of his knowledge of languages, his courtliness, and his dinner-party manner. His Vice-minister is General Sychalski, who is in charge of the army's political education. The Russian General Korczyc, as Chief of Staff, is in charge of military training. The army numbers 200,000 men. It was announced in 1947 that 11,000 of its Russian officers had resigned and returned to the USSR and that 3,000 others had become Polish citizens and remained on duty. But no one knows. In the Polish Air Force, for instance, few Poles are permitted to become pilots.

Rola-Żymierski's chief aid is Colonel Zarzycki-Neugebauer, co-responsible for the political education of the regular army and of all Polish youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one.

The Red Army continued to maintain 300,000 men on Polish soil during 1947—in violation of the Potsdam Agreement. General Rokossovsky has been in command with headquarters in Lignica, Lower Silesia. The Red Army's lack of discipline during the robbery and looting of 1945 and 1946 was actually ordered as a means of sapping the morale of the people. In 1947 the troops became more disciplined. They were put into garrisons and settled on 800,000 hectares of land in western Poland.

It will be seen from all this that the unarmed Polish people are opposed by the armed might of 300,000 Red Army men, by 230,000 members of the Security Police, by 200,000 men of the Polish Army, and by 120,000 men of the ORMO. In addition to this force of over 800,000 there are hosts of special Communist armed squads and a huge network of spies and informers. Even if by some miracle the Polish people could throw off such a huge military yoke, they would be quickly crushed by the incredibly enormous Red Army to the east.

The terror of the military courts increased during my last weeks in Poland. Magistrate courts become little more than clearinghouses for punishing petty thefts, brawls, and disputes over small property. All political cases were tried

by the military courts. In all such cases the sentences meted out were fixed in advance, making of the hearing itself a bitter mockery of law.

Few military court trials are public. Reporters, witnesses, and members of the family of an accused man can attend military court trials only when the Communists have complete assurance that the accused—having been tortured in advance and told that his entire family will be liquidated if he does not plead guilty—will lend himself to what is staged as a legal-sounding process, fit to be revealed to the press of the Western world.

In a majority of cases, military trials take place *in camera*, usually within the prison itself. Sentences are not published. In public trials any testimony considered detrimental to the government or the prosecutor's case is censored from the press. Indictments are read to the accused some twenty-four hours before the opening of his trial, if at all. Lawyers for the defense are uniformly terrified or listless and usually restrict themselves to asking for milder sentences than those demanded by the prosecutors. The defense gains access to the evidence and to the accused only a few hours before the trial. Council for the defense in a military court can only be a lawyer who is given a license by the Minister of National Defense and Security to act as advocate before military courts.

During trials the court usually rejects the motion to call defense witnesses unless they, too, are imprisoned. In Cracow in September of 1947, a number of Polish Peasant Party members were brought before a military court and accused of being members of the underground. Their cases were artificially linked. We were not permitted to supply them with counsel. Defense witnesses were rejected as their names were introduced, for they were free and thus not "prepared." One who did appear at the court to ask if he could testify for the accused was arrested. The speeches of the accused never reached print.

Military courts have taken the place of the raw mass murders that might prompt the west to dispatch really substantial protests. The people of Poland, are, however, being slaughtered or jailed just as ruthlessly as they would be under a less legalistic guise. They still lose their lives or freedom for refusing to renounce democratic ideals. They are constantly being arrested, tried, and shot for the most transparent of reasons. Any Pole can be accused of "spreading false rumors." Any criticism or joke—or even the utterance of an extremely obvious fact—can lead to an accusation. The number of political prisoners is limited only by the capacity of the jails. When the prison walls bulge, an

amnesty releases a certain number, and the act of "mercy" is broadcast to the world. Soon the jails are filled again. All those flung into prison for "spreading false rumors" have their property confiscated—a procedure that not only hastens the state's control of all property but also deprives the accused man's family of its means of existence.

The prisoner whose trial is to be public is systematically "prepared." To the prisoner himself the worst part of this preparation is that he survives it.

He is pulled from his house without warrant amid a scene of terror and is hauled to a jail far from his home. His family cannot discover where he is located. He is held in a cell that has no sanitary conveniences—he lives in his own excrement. The standard prison fare is a once-a-day piece of bread and bowl of watery soup. The prisoner is thus kept and fed for two weeks, then brought into the comfortable office of a Security Police officer.

The officer is excessively kind. He makes the prisoner comfortable, offers him a cigarette and, according to rigid practice says amiably, "We've made a terrible mistake about you. You'll be free tomorrow. But let's have a talk anyway."

The talk is political, and no matter how great the intelligence of the prisoner or how small, he is told, "You are a very intelligent man. You want to see your family again. I think it would be better all the way around and save a lot of trouble, if you withdrew from your party and denounced it for leading you astray."

There are more cigarettes, while the Security Police officer gives the prisoner time and points out that he, the officer, is not a Communist—just a friend of the accused. Then the officer suggests that the man write down the story of his life and political activities, and when this is completed, the man is sent to a cell block with other prisoners. Though crowded, it is better than the dungeon.

Then every day, for the next fifty days, he is asked to write the story of his life and activities. At the end of fifty days he is called to the front office again and accused of telling different stories. He is asked to tell of his whereabouts at times that long since have dissolved in memory. Then he is roughly flung back into the cell block if he does not break down. There he is worked over by informers, who pretend to have been members of the underground. After two weeks he is again brought up for an inquisition. This time the Security Police officer confronts him with a revolver and accuses him of connection

with the illegal underground. He asks him a series of questions over and over again and then turns the task over to another officer and another. The man is kept up all night with a flashlight on his face, while successive groups of officers question him. When he has reached the point of complete exhaustion, he is handed a long statement to sign and told that it is a stenographic report of what he has said. Usually it is a "confession."

A great friend of mine, whose name I must not mention because he miraculously remains alive today, underwent all these hideous indignities. When the statement was handed to him to sign, he still had the strength to read it. He refused to sign it. The Security Police officer smashed him in the face and shouted, "You fool! Do you think I will sit here for another ten hours and write this charge again?"—a frank admission that the statement was not from the victim's mouth.

The sleepless ordeal went on for the next five nights. When my friend still refused to crack—an epic of courage—he was given a special brand of torture reserved for such patriots. A chair was turned upside down and braced. His trousers were ripped from him and he was made to sit with his full weight on the sharpened point of one of the legs of the chair. In a few minutes he was completely paralyzed. This is a torture that breaks the will of the strongest men, but my friend refused to sign the confession when he was revived. The process was repeated three more times, and still he refused. Then the Security Police, having revived him once again, put thin wooden boards over his abdomen and back. They beat heavily upon the boards, causing internal bleeding without leaving a mark on the skin itself.

I brought the last of the Polish Peasant Party's influence to bear in this case and won a release for what was now the shell of a man.

Public, military-court trials are held in auditoriums, cinemas, and other public places of assembly. If the accused mentions the means by which he was forced to sign his confession, court is often adjourned immediately, and the man undergoes a repetition of the torture beyond the sight of correspondents. The body of an executed man or one who dies of torture is not permitted to be claimed by his family, for fear that the mute, horrible wounds might reveal information to the Western press.

The Communists never miss an opportunity to gnaw at a prisoner's love for his family. He is constantly reminded of what will happen to his loved ones if he does not recant. And here one finds a stronger force than torture. There

are many cases of men who have bowed and returned to their families, only to find that their wives and children have turned against them and now treat them as political pariahs. To survive, such men consent to work for, or with, the Communists.

An oppressed person who is still at large—as I was during this reign of terror that I have reviewed—leans heavily on the hope of revealing the facts through the printed and spoken word. There is a desperate chance, one feels, that words can bring change and aid.

As I have indicated, however, the opportunities to print or speak in Poland soon dwindled to nothing. When I looked at the ugly red markings of the censor's pencil on the proof sheets of *Gazeta Ludowa*, I thought bitterly of the manifesto issued by the Communists on July 11, 1944, in Lublin, and the pledges of the Moscow Agreement. The manifesto read:

The Polish Committee of National Liberation, starting the rebuilding of the Polish State, declares hereby and solemnly that all democratic freedoms will be reinstated for all citizens irrespective of race, religion, nationality; those freedoms to be: freedom of free association in political and professional fields, freedom of press and information, freedom of conscience.

The Moscow Agreement had said the same. In the matter of the press, it had not only guaranteed the Polish Peasant Party freedom from censorship, it had also promised just proportion of newsprint and full rights to mechanical equipment and distribution agencies.

As matters turned out, the Polish Peasant Party's publications were held up for months while we sought equipment that Communist papers were getting. We were forced to use ancient linotype machines that had served the underground press during the German occupation. Borejsza, in charge of the main printing plant, ordered our daily paper to be run off last, thus making it impossible for us to get it in the hands of Poles en route to work. We had enough requests for subscriptions for a daily printing of 500,000 copies of *Gazeta Ludowa*, but we were never given paper for more than 70,000. Hundreds of copies of our paper were sabotaged by Communists in the distributing plants and services. Newsstand keepers and bookstores that sold our paper or periodicals were threatened with confiscatory taxes. Individual subscribers were warned that if they did not cancel subscriptions they would be fired from their jobs. When we formed our own distributing service, its directors, employees, and their families were terrorized, its newsboys publicly whipped.

We were not allowed to reach the street with a *Gazeta Ludowa* that showed bare white space where parts of stories and articles had been censored. The pages must be filled as if no censorship had taken place. Typical censored items were news of international conferences, foreign opinions on Poland, stories of foreign credits for Poland in the United States, demands of Western Powers for a free election in Poland, reports on UNRRA aid, stories of police murders or arrests, analyses of democracy, bits on the activity of censors, any item considered unfriendly to the government, examples of private enterprise, electoral abuses, Jewish affairs, justice or the lack of it. Also censored were church messages, cartoons, announcements about missing persons, letters to the editors, poems, jokes, speeches by Polish Peasant Party members in parliament, and articles bearing on the past history of the Peasant Party and its leaders.

The radio was also blocked to us. Some new radios were installed so that only government broadcasts could be received. Out of the loud-speakers poured endless hours of praise for the government and for Russia and vilification of the west.

In the last days of microscopic freedom on *Gazeta Ludowa* we were burdened with an almost ludicrous situation. Our business manager had been approached by the Security Police. He was told that unless he agreed to serve the Communists, he would suffer the fate of his recently arrested cousin, who was under sentence of death.

The man, Kazimierz Banach, signed an agreement and returned to work. When it became apparent that he was sabotaging his own newspaper, I fired him. He reappeared the following day with a Security Police guard. For the next two months, protected by his guard, he dutifully sabotaged us—at our expense.

Our backs were against the wall, and no one knew it better than I. By the autumn of 1947 the Communists had completely consolidated their position in Poland. The nation was crushed in a vise.

On October 8 the members of the executive committee of the Peasant Party met with me in what was left of our Warsaw headquarters and formally recognized the fact that any further group activity in the country had been made impossible.

We decided, however, that those of us who were members of parliament

would carry on the party program in the chamber, from which our protests would reach the free world through the eyes and ears of the foreign correspondents.

The Communists had an answer to this plan. On October 18 I learned from an unimpeachable source that three of us would be stripped of our immunity at the opening of the scheduled third session of the parliament, set for sometime between October 20 and 28. The three doomed men were Stefan Korboński, who was one of the few leaders of the old underground still at large, Wincenty Bryja, treasurer of the Polish Peasant Party, and myself.

I learned, too, that a military court in Warsaw had already received its instructions to try us and to sentence us to death. With us would be arrested Kazimierz Bagiński, who had just been released from prison in order that he could be made one of the victims of a more sensational trial. He, too, was to be executed. All this I quickly confirmed.

During the next twenty-four hours I reached the most difficult decision of my life. The decision to attempt to escape.

The decision did not emerge from my fear of death. I had seen too much to give this a paramount position in my deliberations. The great burden on me was the fate of the Polish people and the attitude that they would take upon my departure.

I reached the conclusion that my death and the deaths of the three others would neither assist the Polish cause nor further the interests of the Peasant Party. The trial and the subsequent murders would create a tension in Poland that could only be discharged in protests and mass demonstrations. Out of such acts would come violent and widespread bloodshed, for the trigger fingers of the Security Police and other military elements longed for provocation. I knew also that if I could escape to a democratic land, I could tell the free peoples of the world for the first time the full shocking story of the debasement of their Ally. I could be the voice of the mute and doomed.

Time grew short. By the morning of October 20 those of us who were about to be condemned had completed plans for our escape. We would leave by five different routes in units composed of Korboński and his wife, Bagiński and his wife, Bryja and my secretary Maria Hulewicz, and Paweł Zaleski (my other secretary) and myself. . . .

On the afternoon of October 20, with parliament due to convene any day thereafter, I presided at my last meeting with Peasant Party M.P.'s. I could not tell them that I was leaving. To have done this would have imperiled them when the Security Police questioned them after my disappearance. I had been prompted to include Madame Hulewicz and Paweł Zaleski in my escape plans, as they most certainly would have been arrested as accomplices as soon as my departure became known to the authorities. Their loyalty would have been their death.

As I met for the last time with our M.P.'s, I found myself silently reviewing the two and a half years of effort that had led to the day of my departure. I took some little comfort from the achievements of the Polish Peasant Party, achievements that could not have been obtained if we had refused to become a part of the Provisional Polish Government.

Mass murders and arrests, I reflected, had been greatly reduced as soon as we returned home in 1945. Looting by the Red Army ceased, as did the deportation of Poles to Russia. More than 250,000 members of the old Home Army, and the Peasant Battalions, the remnants from the anti-Nazi underground—were brought out of hiding and restored to citizenship. Had they not been granted amnesty through our vehement demands, these men most certainly would have been slaughtered or deported to Siberia. We had done much to restore and lift the morale of the people. We had implanted hope in the breast of Poles—a recognition, however dim, that political independence and the economic freedom for which we fought might someday come. We had taught the people of Poland to fight by every legal method the terrors visited upon them by the conqueror. We restored and raised the broken morale of the nation deprived of their hopes—deceived and abandoned by their Allies. We had successfully moved nearly four million Poles from Russia and from that part of Poland which Russia had seized into the new lands in the west, where their life—such as it is—remains better than it would be under complete Russian rule and the constant threat of Siberia.

Above all, we had proved conclusively to the free world that Communist Russia is criminally guilty of depriving the Polish nation of its freedom and independence.

When these thoughts passed, I became aware again of the buzz of voices around me. It was a subdued meeting. Security Police stood in the hallways. I knew I must trick them as best I could. As we adjourned and leisurely

walked from the meeting room to within earshot of the Security Police and the NKVD men who trailed us, I moved from one group of M.P.'s to another, telling each a different story of my immediate plans. To one group I said, loud enough to be overheard, that my mother was ill in Poznań (which was unfortunately true) and that I planned to go there to see her in the next day or two. I told another group, again in a voice that carried to the eager ears of the Communist eavesdroppers that I planned to go to Cracow to see Cardinal Sapieha. To others I mentioned other destinations. All the while I tried to find a plan that would enable me to slip away from the ten members of the Security Police—my special bodyguard—who awaited me outside the building. They would certainly follow me as I left.

Then I said a casual good-by to the brave men who had worked with me in the tragic battle to stem the tide of totalitarianism in Poland. I prayed for my country's deliverance and walked hurriedly to the street.

Chapter Eighteen

ESCAPE

The break for liberty

Home for a razor and a gun

To the forest

Helped by a "Communist"

Safe in the British zone



Of the eight of us who made the break for liberty, six came through. The two who were caught were Bryja and Mme. Hulewicz—Bryja, who had lost his only son in the Warsaw uprising against the Nazis, and the brave girl whose parents had been murdered by the Nazis. Mme. Hulewicz had served as my secretary after a career as an assistant at the University of Cracow and performed dangerous courier work as a member of the underground during the German occupation. She also was the author of the book called *Through Woman's Eyes*.

They were caught in Czechoslovakia before the Gottwald *coup d'état*. That country even then was in the toils of Communists. It had been a country ever eager to offer sanctuary to political refugees as, indeed, most of its leaders had been, in other countries in other times.

But now the Security Police of Czechoslovakia, working as much for the NKVD as were the Polish Security Police, returned the two patriots to the pitiless revenge of the Communist Polish government.

It is my intention here to tell only of my own escape, not of the escape of

the others. I will delete only those names and events that might enable the Communists to wreak reprisals on those who aided me and the places that offered me haven.

It was late afternoon on October 20, 1947, when I stepped from our Warsaw headquarters and walked to the car that awaited me. I told my able chauffeur, Tryc, to drive me quickly to my home. From the rear window of the car I saw my ten "bodyguards," one of them a well-armed girl, leap into their two cars and start after me.

Tryc reveled in such chases. The one joy of that brave man's life was to outspeed my constant followers. On this tense afternoon he broke most of Warsaw's traffic laws. We soon outdistanced the pursuers. As we approached the neighborhood of my quarters, Tryc made an unusual and, as it turned out, providential turn. Instead of approaching the house as he usually did, he circled around the block in such a way as to place my car, when parked, pointed in the opposite direction to its normal parking position.

The Security Police came into the street in the usual manner, and thus their two cars were parked on the opposite side of the street, pointed in the opposite direction from mine.

I told Tryc to wait for me; that I would be out in a few minutes. I went inside quickly and in the fewest possible number of words told Madame Hulewicz and Zaleski that I was ready to leave.

I put on a hat and overcoat, then a large topcoat over the overcoat. Into my pockets I stuffed a razor, a few blades, a small towel, shaving cream, brush, comb, money, and my revolver. If I were caught, I would be forced to shoot it out as long as I could.

The hat and coat were in the nature of a disguise. The Communist press had always portrayed me as a very stout, bald-headed, coatless figure in their cartoons.

While I made myself ready, I gave Zaleski his instructions. He would go with me in the car, be dropped as soon as we were out of sight of the Security Police, walk to the railroad station, and buy me a ticket for Leszno. I would meet him at the station about 8 p.m.

Then we left, very quickly. It was six o'clock and dark. We jumped into our car, and Tryc catapulted away. The Security Police cars were forced to make a U turn in the street, which gave us a few precious seconds of added time. Tryc

drove quickly around the block, hit a main highway, and pushed the accelerator to the floor.

After racing several blocks along the highway we stopped, Zaleski jumped out and started for the station, and I told Tryc to turn to the right and put out our lights. Shortly, I saw the two Security Police cars go screaming by up the main highway.

I did not tell Tryc that I was leaving, for I knew he would be questioned when I was gone. I asked him to drop me at Hoża opposite number 14, which had been the home of a friend.

"Don't bother coming back for me tonight," I said. "I'm having dinner with some friends, and they'll drive me home. Tomorrow, take the car to the garage, and have some work done on it. In fact, take a few days off, and when the car is ready, just go to the party headquarters." At Hoża number 14 I bade him good night. . . .

For the next hour and a half I rode in a succession of taxicabs, taking one to one section of Warsaw, dismissing it, then taking another across the city. My last destination was our party's printing shop. It was only 300 yards from the station.

I walked into the station about eight o'clock. Zaleski was there. We shook hands gravely, and I felt the ticket pressed into my palm. I nodded, went through the gate, and boarded the train.

The third-class compartment was packed with peasants, small officials, and victims of Polish resettlement movements—together with their children and goods. I found a seat in a corner, held a newspaper in front of my face, and after a time, slept.

At dawn on October 21 I got off the train at Ostrów and boarded the train for Leszno. Just before the train reached Krotoszyn, I stepped off at a small station.

This was a familiar region, for my father had been born there, and I had lived there as a boy. The chance of being recognized was greater, but that was outweighed by my knowledge of the terrain. I walked to a neighboring village and went directly to a farmer's door, pretending to be an UNRRA official. He agreed to provide me with a cart and horse, and with a boy at the reins I rode to another village.

I paid the boy and dismissed him and walked into the neighboring forest

to the little cottage of a forest guard and knocked on the door. It was a risk, but I was relieved as soon as I heard his voice. He had the accent of an eastern Pole.

I asked for a glass of milk, stepped inside, and closed the door. His manner was hostile, for the Security Police had treated these forest employees viciously because they had helped the Poles who lived in the forests to fight the enslavement of the country.

"You were taken to Soviet Russia in 1939, weren't you?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said, still very suspicious.

I knew then that I was with a friend.

"I am Mikolajczyk," I said.

He bolted the door quickly, and his whole manner changed.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I'm leaving Poland," I said. His face fell for a moment, but then he shrugged.

"I'm sorry you must go," he said. "But you should have left six months ago. Good luck, good luck. I hope you make it, so that you can tell the west what is happening to us. If you stay, they'll kill you. We don't want any more dead symbols."

Together we planned the means of crossing the border. He would leave immediately by bicycle to contact one of the active smuggling bands that trafficked in goods along the frontier. I must remain in his barn until he returned. His daughter would feed me.

It took my friend nearly three days to pedal to the border, make proper arrangements, and return. Late in the day after he departed, as I hid in the hay of his barn, I thought my end had come.

I heard the scream of motorcycle sirens coming closer and closer to the little place. My heart stood still as I peered out and saw five members of the Security Police thunder up to the nearby cottage and dismount.

With their hands on their guns they moved on the door of the cottage. I got my own gun ready and prayed as they walked to the door of the cottage.

My friend's daughter answered their heavy knock.

"Where is your father?" the leader of the patrol demanded.

"Oh, he just stepped out," the brave girl answered casually. Then, to what was at first my horror, she added, "Won't you come in?"

Then I was forced to smile, for she was taunting them. It was late in the

afternoon, and she knew their inherent fear of being in the forest after dark. They mumbled some excuse and drove away.

My friend returned in midmorning on October 22. When I was certain there was no one in sight, I came out of the barn and my first question was, "Have they discovered I've gone?"

He rushed me inside. "There is nothing in the newspaper," he said. "Nothing on the wireless. And I have good news for you. A smuggling group that operates out of a village near Gubin has agreed to try to take you across the border."

On October 24 a delivery truck, used by a cooperative in that area, drove up to the cottage. The chauffeur hopped out, entered the cottage with what might have been a box of groceries, and emptied the contents—a change of clothes—on the table. I quickly changed into the new clothes and bade good-by to my friends, who decided then and there that they, too, would attempt to escape from Poland in an opposite direction. "Maybe we'll see you on the other side some day," they said.

I left with the driver of the truck as his assistant.

We drove in silence for a time, but finally I had to ask some questions about my destination and about the people who would handle me.

"The name of the next man you will meet does not matter, nor does the village in which he lives. He is the most prominent Communist in the village."

I looked at him, but he was smiling faintly.

"He isn't really a Communist," he said. "He just lets it be known that he is, and that saves him a lot of bother. He entertains a lot of border guards—Polish and Russian soldiers. Gets them very drunk."

In time we drove up to the man's house. He expected me and led me to a dark upstairs bedroom where I changed back into my regular clothes. Then, in the darkness, I heard him say, "There is going to be a party here beginning very soon. You must keep your door locked. Don't answer any knock until I come back for you, and then I will identify myself by knocking in the 'V' manner—three dots and a dash."

The party formed downstairs, and the house was soon filled with drunken Polish and Russian laughter and song. At the height of the party I heard the V knock. I opened the door, and my man said, "Come—quickly."

He led me down the back stairway. My hand clutched my gun. A Polish

soldier stood silently in the back yard. The three of us then walked swiftly across fields for six or eight miles and finally to a road where a jeep, manned by a Red Army sergeant, was waiting. With the sergeant was a German civilian.

I had to trust them. I sat in the back of the jeep, my hand on my revolver, and we drove along in the dead silence of the night. The more we drove, the more convinced I became that this was a fantastically simple plot to return me to captivity.

After an eternity of time we made a right turn off the highway and came into a sleepy little village. My heart leaped when in the darkness I detected a German sign or two. We raced through the village and stopped on its outskirts at a peasant's rambling house. It was five in the morning, but I was expected. An old couple came to the door to mumble a greeting. With them was a strikingly beautiful and stylishly dressed girl. They introduced her as their daughter, though she was obviously a part of the smuggling ring, and then the old couple took me to a tiny bedroom in the rear and bade me good night. I slept. It is the best thing for the nerves. I had negotiated the first important step toward freedom. I was in Germany—the Soviet occupied zone, to be sure—but Germany.

The girl came into the room at nine the next morning with coffee and bread. She sat down and lighted a cigarette that I gave her.

"Don't be afraid if Russian soldiers visit us," she said. "If they see you, just be nonchalant. Give them cigarettes."

That night I sat down to dinner with them, and we were talking idly when the three of them suddenly froze in terror. I swung around, expecting to see a Red Army man at the door with gun in hand. But there was no one there.

Then I knew. I had accidentally lapsed from German into English.

"You're not a German, as we have been told," the girl said evenly.

I looked back at her. "No, I'm not," I said.

"You're British."

I let it go at that. "Yes, I'm British," I said.

They sighed in unison. "For a moment we thought you were a *provocateur*," the girl said.

Then she outlined the next step of my escape. Berlin was too well policed by the Russians to risk going through there. The main highway from Berlin to the British zone of Germany was also too well policed. Plans had to be

altered, and the alteration, she said, would cost an additional five hundred dollars.

"You pay now," she said. I gave her the money and made a quick tabulation of what my escape had cost to date: eleven hundred dollars plus twenty thousand zlotys, which amounted to about three hundred dollars—fourteen hundred dollars in all.

Dressed in ragged peasant's clothes, I was taken on to another village on October 25 by horse and cart. There we were stopped by three Red Army men who were working on a telephone line. From the village on the morning of October 27, I was driven to a railroad station by a boy, who had timed our arrival so that the train was just pulling in. We discarded the horse and cart, walked across a platform filled with German people and Russian troops, and stepped into our third-class compartment.

The boy led me off the train at a short stop, some sixty miles from where we had boarded it, and we walked five miles to another German home, where I spent three nerve-racking days in a small room.

On the third night a jeep containing a civilian and two Red Army men drove up. I was ordered to get in. We drove to a forest near the border between the Russian and British zones. There the jeep stopped. The civilian and I stepped out, and he walked me through the woods until nine o'clock that night, when we came to a clearing where five civilians, heavily armed, were awaiting us.

"We must be very careful," the leader whispered. "If we fall into the hands of the Russian guards, it means the lives of all of us. The patrols are very heavy tonight. If you hear the least bit of noise, you must drop to the ground and try not to breathe."

Our grim little group walked the remainder of the night, crossing and recrossing barbed wire emplacements, and as the first suggestion of dawn touched the east, we tramped into a small German town. They stopped on the edge of the city.

"You're in the British zone," the leader said. "We leave you here. When it is light enough, go to that house there—" and he pointed at it. "A British officer lives there."

I told him I'd go then and there, but he shook his head.

"You'd arouse suspicion," he ruled. "The German police are active, and

there are many Communists on this side of the line as well as on the other. Just wait until it is quite light; then join your friends."

I hid in the streets until about 7:30 A.M. and then went to the house. A suspicious German housekeeper answered the door and peered at me through a slim opening. I asked to see the British officer in charge.

"Wait," she said and closed and locked the door. I had a feeling that I should have pushed into the room. It is awful to be so close to safety and yet to be standing still helplessly in danger.

At last a young soldier came to the door and after a bit admitted me.

"I am Mikolajczyk," I said. "I . . ."

A grin came over his face and he shook my hand. "We heard over the wireless that you had escaped," he laughed. "We thought the Russians had killed you and simply put out a story that you were missing. Wait."

He returned after a time with a very grumpy British colonel who demanded to see my papers and could not understand why I had been unable to carry any. Finally, I asked him to call either Mr. Bevin or Mr. Churchill on the phone, but he rejected this as an implausible solution and was not friendly until I mentioned the name of a British officer who had done much secret and heroic work in connection with the Polish underground during the war.

Two days later the British were able to drive me to an airport. The RAF had sent a special plane for me. It flew me to the blessed security of England, and I was reunited, at last, with my wife and my son.

The war had imposed on my little family many great hardships. My wife had suffered through years of German concentration camps, as had my son before the Polish underground was able to free him.

Now we are together again. Yet for myself the war has not ended. It cannot end until that precious thing for which Poland bled—peace and security and democracy—is once again established on our soil.

Chapter Nineteen

CONCLUSION

Communism is Red fascism

Deadly parallels between two systems

More dangerous than fascism

How to fight back

The free world must combine

Counterwave of the future



THE Communist system, whose aim is to dominate the world, calls itself "a people's democracy," but it is in fact Red fascism. It mouths the slogans of the freedom of man but brings the rule of violence and terror. It speaks of the equality of all people and does not recognize the rights of man; instead, it tramples his self-respect, demoralizes his soul, divides peoples into the minority of the elite and the overwhelming majority of the serfs. It palms itself off as the herald of truth but abuses and discredits its loftiest slogans by spreading lies all over the world. While allegedly combating capitalistic exploitation, it creates the worst type of state capitalism, placing at its disposal all privileges, all state rights, all executive power. By the aid of armed branches of enforcement it strips the citizen of the right to initiative and honest profit. It turns him into a slave.

This system should be fought by all free people systematically, wisely, and effectively. For the victory of communism would plunge the world into chaos

and mankind into misery and rivers of fratricidal blood, flowing constantly and without interruption, not on the battlefields but in prisons, concentration camps, and execution places.

The Communist system is more dangerous than nazism. We all are familiar with how much misfortune nazism brought upon the world, especially when it joined its forces with Mussolini's fascism and with Japanese totalitarianism. It took a frightful war to wipe these three off the face of the earth. We Poles know well what nazism means in practice.

In my case the Germans seized the fruit of my own and my father's lifetime of hard work, tortured my sixteen-year-old son in prison, and threw my wife into a concentration camp, not only depriving her of liberty, but permanently ruining her health.

The assertion that communism is even more dangerous in no way diminishes the evil of nazism. It simply increases the horror of the Communist danger.

Nazism sprouted with German nationalism. That is why nazism was not able to recruit many fanatical supporters among other nations. There were, to be sure, those who fanatically supported Hitler, but they were individuals who had no backing in their own countries.

Communism works under the slogan of internationalism. Hence, there is a far greater number of Communists in every country ready to betray their land, to shed the blood of their people, to help install a dictatorship in their country, and place at the helm of their nation individuals blindly carrying out Stalin's orders.

Because they were satisfied that they were a master race, the Nazis did not study the moods and undercurrents of the nations they swallowed. They believed the giving of an order and the exercise of brute force sufficed. They did their own murdering. Their crimes were easily labeled. Their monstrous conduct, since it was alien, tightened the resistance of the oppressed. In Poland one could be certain that every person speaking Polish would furnish aid and asylum to anyone opposing the Germans.

The Communists, on the other hand, have at their service in every country a host of spies and *agents provocateurs*, speaking the language of that country, familiar with the mentality of that nation. In their propaganda they use the slogans and catchwords indigenous to the country. They have thousands of citizens of various nationalities training in Russia and in other countries.

Orders are given secretly to the vanguards in the country in question, and these agents pass the orders on to public figures, coating all slogans with the flavor of patriotism, independence, and sovereignty.

The Nazis ruled alone. They issued the orders and carried out these orders themselves. The Communists maintain a police force in every country. These are organized openly or in secret. The NKVD issues orders and makes decisions. The murders and violence are carried out by the citizens of the home country.

The Nazis—true to their doctrine of *Lebensraum*—engaged in a program to exterminate populations. Although they reached an efficiency that enabled them to cremate up to ten thousand people daily in Oświęcim, they were still too limited in space and time to destroy as many human beings as can the Communists. Handicapped neither by time nor by space, Soviet Russia has put this principle into effect: the liquidated must work before their deaths. The slavery of the labor camps replaces the ovens of Oświęcim. The mercy of the final sleep recedes.

Nazism, thanks to its geographical position, could be surrounded, isolated, and destroyed, especially when Hitler began open warfare. Russia with her vastness is in a more favorable situation. Employing other methods, it occupies one country after another. Today it extends from the Elbe to Trieste in Europe. Russia fights in Greece, is secretly in the Middle East, has her vanguards in France and in Italy. Entire nations disappear in the enormity of its spread. Its acts stagger the wildest imagination. Ten million Ukrainians were dispersed over Siberia following the first great purge, according to reports brought back to Poland by witnesses from many sectors.

The extermination of Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians forced into Russia is a ghastly chapter in history. If this continues, though the envoys of these nations are still recognized in the west, the nations themselves will be dissolved.

Can countries subjugated by Communists liberate themselves without outside help?

My answer is a decisive—"NO."

Poland's fight from 1945 to 1947 demonstrated how a nation can be devoured despite Homeric efforts to win the independence pledged to it by its Western Allies. All legal opposition in Poland was crushed, vivid proof that a police state can subjugate the majority, even in a country known for its will to free-

dom and independence. Poland cannot rise again without aid from outside the country or the unlikely early collapse of communism in Russia.

There are a number of methods by which the democracies and the freedom-minded people in the captive countries can combat Red Russia's tremendous offensive that is aimed at conquest of the world.

The first obligation placed on the democracies is to *recognize* that one of the sternest wars in history is in progress at this moment and that the aggressor, the USSR, has conquered more than 100 million human beings in Europe alone and is maintaining incredibly efficient operatives in every country in the world. After the decision to recognize this aggression is taken, full information must be given to the people to keep them aware of Red plans and aims.

The democracies, being lovers of peace as they should be, must guard constantly against one evil fruit of that love—the instinct to pacify, the desire to appease.

My fear, and the fear of the enslaved millions, is that if Stalin today were to say to the democracies, "We will hereafter remain behind the Iron Curtain of the Stettin-Trieste line; we will not bother you further," many democracies would breathe a sigh of relief and try to forget the countless millions of Europeans who have been chained by a totalitarian handful. Acceptance of such a solution would be a new Munich, a reincarnated Teheran.

It is important in these times that we make more use of the established instruments of peace. The world needs a coordinated global plan to combat communism. Russia has cold-bloodedly broken the agreements it signed with the United States and Great Britain at Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam; it has perverted the Atlantic Charter to which it subscribed; and it has, of course, violated each agreement that it has signed with Poland and other states, which now have become helpless puppets.

These ruptured pacts should be brought to the attention of the United Nations by the remaining parties to the pledges. The United Nations can be strengthened, of course, by the elimination of the veto privilege in the Security Council, a right that has enabled Russia to obstruct nearly all of that body's efforts to mend the chaos of the world. For the Reds know full well that out of chaos will nearly always rise the specter of communism.

There may be those who will say that if the UN Charter is changed against Russia's wishes, Russia will resign from UN.

I wonder if that would represent such a tremendous calamity? Russia's outlook on UN was expressed at a meeting of the Polish Politburo in Warsaw in May, 1945, when the nations were meeting at San Francisco, and the world looked hopefully toward that city. Jakób Berman, the Communist leader of Poland today, told a group of Communists at a secret meeting:

"The Soviets are doing their usual clever job at San Francisco. We will continue to blind the west by entering into agreements, as we did at Yalta and elsewhere."

One needs only to look through the minutes of UN proceedings to realize the striking manner in which the USSR has used that organization solely as a sounding board. Russia has no intention of quitting UN. Why would it walk out completely on an organization that is the means of spreading its propaganda and baseless lies across the front pages of the world's free press?

World War II was like a terrible tidal wave. It inundated much of the fertile soil of the world. In some places that tide has moved back of its own accord. In other places it can be dammed up by spiritual and physical aid to the peoples who are still figuratively up to their necks in the flood.

The Marshall Plan constitutes a tremendous physical boon to those people. It will do its share to restore fertility and vigor to the devastated regions. It will be, and is being, fought tenaciously by the Reds, for it threatens to elevate in some countries the greatest of all menaces to communism—stability and a better standard of living.

The spirit of the devastated lands needs lifting, too. The morale needs sustenance. My own country is an example. Its 24,000,000 people, who underwent fantastic hardship while remaining in the Allied camp during the war and who were promised freedom, are now wholly enslaved by what amounts to not even five per cent of the population. The Poles sought to vote that yoke off their backs, and the vote was stolen. They looked to the Big Three to carry out the solemn promises made to what President Roosevelt once called "the inspiration of the nations—Poland." But those pacts have been callously broken by Russia with only "paper protests" from the remaining parties to the pledges, and no one has dared to raise a protesting voice in UN.

The Reds have adopted the old Goebbels technique of lying. Those lies must be combated by truths from the democracies. If they are not, then eventually the people of the enslaved countries will believe what they are reading in their controlled press.

The world cannot be divided where human liberty is concerned. It cannot exist half free and half slave, especially when the sleepless determination of the half-slave section is to impose that form of life on the drowsily contented free half.

This, too, the democracies must always keep in mind: If Russia today possessed A-bombs, bacteria bombs, and other instruments of mass destruction—possessed them in quantity and had the proper means of delivering them—they would at this moment be annihilating the United States, the British Isles, and every other moral and physical force opposed to their ideology.

Their plan, which they have revealed in capturing eastern Europe, is to rule the world and to reduce all human life to the inhumanity of serfdom.

Some British and Americans to whom I have talked since my escape from Poland feel that Poland and the other eastern European countries were politically persecuted by Russia because we were hotly partisan peoples. The Reds, these people say, are not the instinctive enemies of persons who are bereft of political beliefs.

I can only repeat that Red persecution recognizes no political faith. The world heard about the attacks on the Polish Peasant Party only because the party was organized and because some of us were privileged to lift our voices in indignation. In Poland, certainly, those who belonged to no party were treated just as criminally. Their voices were not heard because there was no organization through which they could speak. They were shot and hanged (and continue to be) in ghastly silence.

Stalin makes a point of saying, in his interviews with Americans especially, that communism and capitalism can exist side by side in the world today. The capitalistic states, he adds, can do business with him.

From a political standpoint he is partially correct. Poland and Russia lived side by side from 1921 to 1939. From an economic viewpoint the man is lying, and the free world should not be tricked into believing that since it sells only to the state, when selling to Russia, trade with that country is simplified. Russia today is a gigantic economic menace to private initiative and private enterprise everywhere.

It has killed, or is in the process of killing, all private enterprise from eastern Germany to Alaska. Unlike even the most radical Socialist countries, it did not purchase the industries it has nationalized. Unlike any other form of

government, including the most radical Socialist form, it does not permit its workers the right to strike or quit or seek better pay.

This means not only that millions are exploited as slaves; it also means that Russia's economy does not have to worry about high costs of production.

There can be no fair competition for world markets if Russia is in the picture. Its output has been stepped up considerably since 1939. It has brought under its control the 100,000,000 inhabitants of eastern Europe, giving it a reservoir of slave labor that can be tapped as fast as the prison camp serfs "earn their deaths" in the Arctic wilderness or the coal mines of the Urals. Among the newly conquered millions behind the Iron Curtain are many trained workers and professional men; these give Russian production a quality it never had before.

Besides all this, Russia has the power to frustrate competitive production in the free countries. Trained Communist agents infiltrate the western labor unions, conducting diversionary activities designed more to weaken western industry than to improve the workers' conditions of employment. It is easier to frustrate than to stabilize and build, and Russia everywhere takes advantage of this all-too-human weakness.

Russian trade agreements with the captive states are secret deals by which it is able to suck the sustenance from each country, fix variable prices to be paid for what it needs, rob one country of its raw materials and force another, and more industrialized, country to deliver the finished product. Stalin, sitting on top of nearly 300 million human beings, directs their output as easily as a chess master moves a pawn. He does not need the products of the free world. He has everything he needs for war or peace, except the inventiveness of an uncoerced people.

The west has demobilized. Russia has not, and, in addition, has gained the armed forces of many countries.

The west believes in the freedom of labor. Russia exploits its tremendous manpower.

The west's leaders can be removed from office if they violate the essential rights of their peoples. The Communist gang cannot be removed, and when Stalin dies, there will be well-trained men to take his place.

The west maintains no secret forces in Russia. Russia, as I have said, maintains *sub rosa* forces in every country, ready to strike at every weakness.

Do my personal experiences matter? They do not, nor do the experiences of

others who have been forced out or persecuted during Russia's new offense against freedom: Petkov, Maniu, Dimitrov, Nagy, Lettrich, and their like.

Only this matters: Red Russia is at war with the dignity and place of the human being and with all governments that afford its citizens those rights. Unless the free peoples are warned and unless they adequately prepare to resist this monstrous evil, the whole world could become what chained and terrified Poland is today.

It is not within the province of this book to map out the details of the fight against communism. Its modest aim has been to present to free people the misfortunes of my nation, which had their beginning during the war in the political errors of appeasement of Russia and in the occupation of my country by the brutal forces of a Communist minority acting at the command of, and with the aid of, Soviet Russia under the high-sounding name of "people's democracy."

May the misfortunes I have outlined and the analysis of the methods employed serve as a warning to other democratic nations and as an aid in the fight against communism. May it finally contribute to a working plan for an anti-Communist world offensive; victory would insure real peace to the world and freedom and happiness to nations.

I believe the time will come when such a planned offensive, strengthened by truth, righteousness, and a faith in victory, will intensify a current of freedom that will push back the waves of communism and meet the mighty longing for freedom that lies in the hearts of 300 million people living under the yoke of Red fascism. The counterwave can, and must, break down the prison bars, not only of the nations behind the Iron Curtain, but also of the enslaved peoples of the Soviet Union itself.

APPENDIX

1. *The Polish-Soviet Agreement signed in London on July 30, 1941, provided:*

1. The Government of the U.S.S.R. recognizes that the Soviet German treaties of 1939 relative to territorial changes in Poland have lost their validity. The Government of the Republic of Poland declares that Poland is not bound by any agreement with any third State directed against the U.S.S.R.

2. Diplomatic relations will be restored between the two Governments upon the signature of this agreement, and an exchange of Ambassadors will follow immediately.

3. The two Governments mutually undertake to render one another aid and support of all kinds in the present war against Hitlerite Germany.

4. The Government of the U.S.S.R. expresses its consent to the formation on the territory of the U.S.S.R. of a Polish army under a Commander appointed by the Polish Government in agreement with the Soviet Government. The Polish army on the territory of the U.S.S.R. will be subordinated in operational matters to the Supreme Command of the U.S.S.R., on which there will be a representative of the Polish Army. All details as to command, organization and employment of the force will be settled in subsequent agreement.

5. This Agreement will come into force immediately upon its signature and without ratification.

Protocol.—As soon as diplomatic relations are re-established the Government of the U.S.S.R. will grant amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the U.S.S.R., either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds.

Secret Protocol.—1. All kinds of claims of public as well as of private character will be considered in further negotiations between both Governments.

2. This protocol comes into force simultaneously with the pact of 30th July 1941.

London, 30th July, 1941

Wladyslaw Sikorski
I. Maisky

2. *Ambassador Kot's note of October 13, 1941, to Vishinsky about Polish prisoners in Russia:*

During my conversation on October 7, Mr. Commissar, I quoted figures relating to Polish citizens who were still detained in large numbers in camps and mentioned the fact that certain categories among them had been transferred to very remote Northern regions. In spite of repeated Polish requests and the assurance given on behalf of the Soviets, this Embassy has not as yet received the list of localities nor the exact numbers of Polish citizens released.

Contrary to the assurances that except for a small number of individuals suspected, indicted or convicted of espionage on behalf of Germany, whose names and dossiers up to now have not been communicated to the Embassy, all Polish citizens had been set free and that in a small number of cases only was delay caused by purely technical considerations, the Embassy is in possession of information that there are still in a number of prisons and camps thousands of Polish citizens who were not informed of the Agreement concluded on July 30, 1941, or were informed that the provisions of this agreement and of the Decree (Amnesty) did not apply to them.

By way of example, may I state that Polish citizens are still being detained in prison at Saratov, Gorki, Balashov, Chelyabinsk, Kizel, and in compulsory labor camps in the Primorski Kray in the North-Eastern extremity of the Yakut district (near the mouth of the Kolyma on the Arctic Ocean), near Aldan, in the region of Tomsk, Karaganda, in the mines of Karabash (Chelyabinsk district), in the Ivgiel camp (Sviardlovsk district), in the Archangel district and in the Republic of Komi, along the railway line under construction between Kotlas and Pechora and at other points.

I have the honor to draw your attention, Mr. Commissar, to another characteristic feature of the conduct of local government authorities toward Polish citizens who are released, or who approach them with the request for employment or for the assignment of a residence. This conduct . . . consists in informing those concerned that the blame for their difficult situation rests with the Polish Government and their representatives in the U.S.S.R. Naturally Polish nationals are not misled by this, but it arouses unnecessary mistrust among the Polish population.

I also venture to draw your attention to the fact that the organization of the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R. is not progressing in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Agreement of July 30, 1941, or with the intentions of the two Governments.

The Supreme Command of the Polish armed forces in the U.S.S.R. has vainly waited four weeks for a decision on the formation of further Polish divisions and the designation of the localities in which this formation is to take place.

The local administrative authorities very often do not carry out the instructions issued by the central authorities with regard to questions concerning the Polish Army and create new additional difficulties, as for instance by declining to release from prisons and camps all Polish citizens, military and reservists, and in many instances by detaining the more physically fit elements, which reduces the military value of the units already formed.

Moreover, considerable numbers of Polish citizens enrolled in the Red Army and subsequently transferred to the so-called labor battalions, have not up till now been directed to the Polish Army. Thus the Polish contribution to the common struggle against Germany is being weakened to the detriment of the cause of all the Allies.

3. *Sikorski-Stalin Declaration on Polish-Soviet collaboration, December 4, 1941:*

The Government of the Polish Republic and the Government of the U.S.S.R., animated by the spirit of friendly understanding and fighting collaboration, declare:

1. German Hitlerite Imperialism is the worst enemy of mankind—no compromise with it is possible.

Both States together with Great Britain and other Allies, supported by the United States

of America, will wage war until complete victory and final destruction of the German forces.

2. Implementing the Treaty concluded on July 30, 1941, both Governments will render each other during the war full military assistance, and troops of the Republic of Poland located on the territory of the Soviet Union will wage war against the German brigands shoulder to shoulder with Soviet troops.

In peace-time their mutual relations will be based on good neighborly collaboration, friendship and reciprocal honest fulfillment of the obligations they have taken upon themselves.

3. After a victorious war and the appropriate punishment of the Hitlerite criminals, it will be the aim of the Allied States to ensure a durable and just peace. This can be achieved only through a new organization of international relations on the basis of unification of the democratic countries in a durable alliance. Respect for international law, backed by the collective armed force of the Allied States must form the decisive factor in the creation of such an organization. Only under this condition can a Europe destroyed by German barbarism be restored and a guarantee be created that the disaster caused by the Hitlerites will never be repeated.

4. *Note on Russian complaints about Polish "imperialism," sent to Moscow by Polish government in London on February 25, 1943:*

The Polish Government repudiates most definitely the malicious propaganda which accuses Poland of indirect or direct inimical tendencies toward Soviet Russia.

It is absolutely absurd to suspect Poland of intentions to have the eastern boundaries of the Polish Republic on the Dnieper and the Black Sea, or to impute to Poland any tendencies to move her frontier farther to the east.

The Polish Government . . . has, from the moment of the conclusions of the Polish-Soviet Treaty of July 30th, 1941, maintained the unchangeable attitude that as far as the question of frontiers between Poland and Soviet Russia is concerned, the *status quo* previous to September 1st, 1939, is in force; and considers the undermining of this attitude, conformant with the Atlantic Charter, as detrimental to the unity of the Allied Nations.

The Polish Government considers the close cooperation and confidence between all the Allies as an indispensable factor for victory and a permanent peace, and condemns all facts and suggestions tending to wreck or weaken the common front of the United Nations.

5. *Polish note on the Curzon line, March 4, 1943:*

Until the conclusion of agreements between the U.S.S.R. and the Third Reich concerning the partition of Polish territories, the Treaty of Riga and its frontier clauses approved in 1923 by the Conference of Ambassadors and by the United States of North America were never called in question by Russia. These Russo-German Agreements were cancelled by the Polish-Soviet Agreements of July 30th, 1941. The question of any return to the German-Soviet frontier line of that year, requires no further comment.

The so-called "Curzon Line" was proposed during hostilities in 1919-1920 solely as an armistice line and not as a frontier.

The polling order by the Soviet occupying authorities in Eastern Poland in 1939 [a reference to a gun-point plebiscite, conducted in eastern Poland in 1939 by the Red Army, NKVD, and Communist organizers] was contrary to international law. It constitutes one of those unilateral acts, which are not recognized by the Allied Nations. Therefore it cannot form a basis for any legal acts and cannot, in particular, deprive Polish citizens of their title to Polish citizenship or to relief organized for their benefit by the Polish Government with the aid of the Governments of Great Britain and the United States.

The declaration of the Polish Government of February 25th, 1943, backed unanimously by the entire Polish Nation, was not intended to produce controversy, which would be so harmful at the present moment. It only stated the indisputable Polish rights to these territories, in which the Polish Nation will continue to live in harmony with its Ukrainian and White Ruthenian fellow-countrymen in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Polish Government.

The Polish Government, categorically rejecting the absurd insinuations concerning alleged Polish imperialistic claims in the east, has expressed, and continues to express to the Soviet government, its readiness for an understanding based on friendly mutual relations.

6. *Polish communiqué of April 17, 1943, on German claims to role of "European redeemer":*

There is no Pole who would not be deeply shocked by the news of the discovery. . . . At the same time, however, the Polish Government, on behalf of the Polish nation, denies to the Germans the right to draw from a crime, which they ascribe to others, arguments in their own defense. The profoundly hypocritical indignation of the German propaganda will not succeed in concealing from the world the many cruel, repeated and still lasting crimes committed on the Polish people.

The Polish government recalls such facts as:

- . . . the removal of Polish officers from prisoner of war camps and shooting them for political offenses alleged to have been committed by them before the war.

- . . . mass arrests of reserve officers subsequently deported to concentration camps, where they die a slow death. From Cracow and the neighboring district alone 6,000 were deported in June, 1942.

- . . . the compulsory enlistment into the German Army of Polish war prisoners from territories illegally incorporated into the Reich.

- . . . the forcible conscription of about 200,000 Poles from the same territories and the execution of the families of those who succeeded in escaping.

- . . . the massacre of 1½ million people by executions and in concentration camps.

- . . . the recent imprisonment of 80,000 people of military age, officers and men, the torturing and murdering of them in the camps of Majdanek and Treblinka.

It is not to enable the Germans to lay impudent claims to appear in the role of defenders of Christianity and the European civilization that Poland is making immense sacrifices and fighting and enduring immeasurable sufferings. The blood of Polish soldiers

and Polish citizens, wherever shed, cries for expiation before the conscience of the free peoples of the world. The Polish Government stigmatize all the crimes committed against Polish citizens and deny the right to exploit these victims for political maneuvers by whoever is guilty of these crimes committed against the Polish nation and the Polish State.

7. Soviet note of April 25, 1943, severing relations because of Polish attitude on Katyn:

The Soviet Government considers the recent behavior of the Polish Government with regard to the U.S.S.R. as entirely abnormal, and violating all regulations and standards of relations between two Allied States. The slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union launched by the German Fascists in connection with the murder of the Polish officers, which they themselves committed in the Smolensk area on territory occupied by German troops, was at once taken up by the Polish Government, and is being fanned in every way by the Polish official press.

Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the U.S.S.R., the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject.

Having committed a monstrous crime against the Polish officers, the Hitlerite authorities are now staging a farcical investigation, and for this they have made use of certain Polish pro-Fascist elements whom they themselves selected in occupied Poland, where everything is under Hitler's heel, and where no honest Pole can openly have his say.

For the "investigation" both the Polish Government and the International Red Cross, which is compelled, in conditions of a terroristic regime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation farce staged by Hitler. Clearly such an "investigation," conducted behind the back of the Soviet Government, cannot evoke the confidence of people possessing any degree of honesty.

The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultaneously in the German and Polish press, and was conducted along the same lines, leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord in carrying out this hostile campaign between the enemy and the Allies—Hitler—and the Polish Government.

While the peoples of the Soviet Union, bleeding profusely in a hard struggle against Hitlerite Germany, are straining every effort for the defeat of the Common Enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples, and of all freedom-loving democratic countries, the Polish Government, to please Hitler's tyranny, has dealt a treacherous blow to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government is aware that this hostile campaign against the Soviet Union is being undertaken by the Polish Government by making use of the slanderous Hitlerite fake for the purpose of wresting from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania.

All these circumstances compel the Soviet Government to recognize that the present Government of Poland, having slid on to the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued Allied relations with the U.S.S.R., and has adopted a hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union.

On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government.

8. *From Miłojajczyk's first speech as Prime Minister on July, 1943:*

The Polish citizens in Russia are the object of our constant concern. The government will do everything in its power to bring active help to those unfortunate victims of the war. The evacuation of some of these people from Russia and the possibility of attending to the welfare of the rest would be regarded by us as a sign of good will on Premier Stalin's part and would open a new era of good relations with our country.

The Polish-Soviet problem—this is at the present time the leading question in our foreign policy.

The Polish government approaches this problem with the maximum of good will and faith. The Polish government desires a permanent understanding and collaboration with the USSR, based on mutual respect, on regard for mutual rights and interests, and on the platform of the clearly defined declaration of the government of General Sikorski. I realize the difficulties arising from the recent and not so recent past. But I assure you that we shall work to the best of our ability to sweep aside and remove these difficulties and to prepare the way for a better future.

This desire springs not only from the wish for peaceful international cooperation but also from a full understanding of the common interests in the fight with the age-old German pressure. Our nation has always avowed this political standpoint, and therefore, the Polish Diet was almost unanimous in its acceptance of the Polish-Soviet nonaggression pact of 1932, and there were foundations for the agreement of July, 1941, despite the unpleasant memories of the recent past.

Marshal Stalin has announced that he desires "a strong and independent Poland" and that he does not wish to interfere in our internal affairs. Nor is this our wish. We await the act of good will for which General Sikorski appealed. An understanding between Poland and Russia is a historic necessity for both countries, but it is also a historic necessity for Europe as a whole, for on it will depend the consolidation of Europe.

Europe regards the Polish question as a test case, which will show what is to become of the European Continent as a whole. Therefore, the Polish-Russian understanding must be honest, just, and permanent. Poland is necessary to Europe, just as a consolidated Europe is necessary to Poland.

9. *Agreement between Polish political parties of Home Representation:*

Warsaw

15th August 1943

TO: The Polish Prime Minister:

We enclose herewith the contents of an important Agreement which was signed on the 15th August, 1943, by the four political parties. The Agreement is to be published shortly in the Underground Press.

* **DECLARATION OF THE POLITICAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FOUR POLITICAL PARTIES FORMING THE POLISH HOME POLITICAL REPRESENTATION.**

1. In view of the immensity of the task facing the Polish people at present, and which

will confront them also at the moment of the liberation of the country from the occupying enemy forces:

- (a) rebuilding the Polish State;
- (b) establishing the frontiers and the restoration of internal order;
- (c) active co-operation in determining new forms of international collaboration;

the undersigned parties, which represent the main trends of Polish political thought and the vast majority of the politically organized Polish community, have decided to co-operate closely (at least until an official announcement of elections to the constitutional legislative bodies), at the same time observing the programs contained in the declaration of the Government. These parties will co-operate in Poland, in the Polish Home Political Representation, in the Council of National Unity, and possibly, in the Council of the Republic, and they will collaborate in full solidarity with the Delegate of the Polish Government in London.

The above-mentioned parties will approach their representatives in London with a united appeal, aiming at a similar observance of collaboration both within the Government and within the National Council.

While supporting the Government which represents the collaboration of the parties, and accepting their full responsibility for it, the parties are opposed, while this collaboration lasts, to any other form of Government.

2. The parties will ensure that the executive machinery of the Government authorities shall possess not only professional qualifications but also the character of an institution closely bound up with the social and civic factors in the Homeland; and shall be free from those elements responsible for the mistakes of the former regime, and also free from any totalitarian leanings.

3. The parties will give the full support of their organization and propaganda to the Polish Home Army, as an organ of national unity, which will be decisive in the open struggle for our future. At the same time, they will cooperate in establishing a harmonious collaboration of the civilian and military authorities, in preparing for coming action, which is the main object of the entire political administrative and military activity.

4. For the present, for the period of the Peace negotiations, and that immediately following the conclusion of hostilities, the parties accept the following basic principles as their war aims:

- (a) The basic principle of the foreign policy should be the collaboration with the Allies, based on equality with a distinct emphasis on self-determination in affairs concerning Poland, her sovereign rights and the integrity of her territory.
- (b) A constant watchfulness concerning Soviet influence, which is becoming increasingly marked in the Allied countries and a ceaseless recalling to their consciousness of the latent danger in Russian-Communist totalitarian peace aims.
- (c) The securing to Poland of a Western and Northern frontier, which would guarantee to her a wide access to the sea, together with integrity of her Eastern frontier, as well as suitable indemnities.
- (d) The formation of a confederation of states of which the Polish-Czechoslovak union might be the nucleus.
- (e) The solution of the problem of national minorities, along the principles of tradition, freedom and equality of rights and obligations.

5. In the transitory period, before the Legislative Assembly, which shall be elected according to a new democratic electoral law, is convoked:

- (a) The Republican system of the State shall be preserved and its legal institutions shall not be changed without the approval of the parties.
- (b) The composition of the Government of National Unity shall not be altered or supplemented without the approval of the parties.
- (c) The existing legislation shall be freed from the influences of the former regime and those of the Government of occupation and extended in accordance with the following postulates:

- (c-1) Freedom of the citizens, equality of rights and obligations and the establishment of territorial economic, social and cultural self-government;
- (c-2) Recognition to be given to labour, as constituting the greatest social value, and the foundation of the economic development and welfare of the country;
- (c-3) The taking over, during the transitional period, by the Government in collaboration with the local social elements, of the industrial establishments, which during the period of occupation were administered by the Germans, as well as of all formerly German and ownerless property and credit institutions and the taking over by the local Government of public utility institutions;
- (c-4) The taking of immediate steps to introduce agrarian reform in order to create such division of arable land as shall ensure the largest possible number of efficient, strong one-family farms, which would guarantee an adequate supply of food for the whole Nation; in this connection, during the period of lifting the occupation, the taking over and placing at the disposal of the State of all landed property destined for agrarian reform, and in particular of landed property formerly owned by the Germans.
- (c-5) The ensuring of the supply of foodstuffs and of indispensable material for industrial production;
- (c-6) The creation of suitable conditions for the development of cooperatives, which shall also be ensured the necessary position in the organization of economic local Government, and which, within the framework of the planning policy, will be used for the production of foodstuffs and especially their exchange and distribution;
- (c-7) The working out of a plan of financial and monetary policy, and of the postwar reconstruction of the country;
- (c-8) The repatriation of the ejected from their homes, the imprisoned and interned in German camps and in Russia, and of those deported for forced labour; the liquidation of unemployment in towns and in the country in accordance with the principles of universal employment.

6. The above Agreement of the signatory parties shall not stand in the way of free development of their political ideals and programmes, as well as any propaganda they may undertake in the future. Nevertheless, in all their public statements in the press, the signatories shall be bound to observe that loyalty which is the outcome of their mutual understanding and collaboration.

10. *Mikolajczyk's note to Churchill, November 16, 1943:*

CONFIDENTIAL

Memorandum

In the course of his last conversation with Mr. Eden on October 5, before Mr. Eden's departure for Moscow, the Polish Prime Minister, M. Mikolajczyk, placed before him documents emphasizing the full measure of confidence that the Polish people in Poland and the Poles abroad place in the policy of the Polish government. Basing himself on this support, M. Mikolajczyk once more gave expression to the complete trust placed in Great Britain and the United States by the Polish people and the Polish government. He appealed for guarantees and the safeguarding of the right of the Allied Polish government to assure administration on Polish territory immediately after its liberation from German occupation, and also for the safeguarding of life and property of the Polish population in the event of the march of Soviet troops into Poland. At the same time he appealed for intervention, which would bring about the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations, which in the present circumstances has become a matter of particular urgency.

The unwillingness of the Polish government to enter into discussion on frontier questions is based on the following considerations:

1. Poland, who entered the war in 1939 in defense of her territory, has never given up fighting and has not produced any Quisling, is fully entitled to expect that she will emerge from this war without reduction of her territory.

2. The Polish eastern lands, which are the object of Soviet claims, extend to half the territory of the Polish Republic. They contain important centers of Polish national life. They are closely knit with Poland by ties of tradition, civilization, and culture. The Polish population, which has resided there for centuries, forms a relative majority of the population of these lands. On the other hand, the lower density of their population and their possibilities of economic development furnish Poland with a socially sound means of solving the problem of the overpopulation of her western and southern provinces.

3. The Polish government could not see their way to enter a discussion on the subject of territorial concessions, above all, for the reason that such a discussion in the absence of effective guarantees of Poland's independence and security on the part of Great Britain and the United States would be sure to lead further and further to ever-new demands.

The attribution to Poland of eastern Prussia, Danzig, Opole Silesia, and the straightening and shortening of the Polish western frontier are in any case dictated by the need to provide for the stability of future peace, the disarmament of Germany, and the security of Poland and other countries of central Europe. The transfer to Poland of these territories cannot therefore be treated fairly as an object of compensation for the cession to the USSR of Polish eastern lands, which for reasons adduced above do by no means represent to the USSR a value comparable to that which they have for Poland.

The attempt made to prejudge the fate of Polish eastern territories by means of a popular vote organized under Soviet occupation by the occupying authorities is without any value either political or legal.

It would be equally impossible to obtain a genuine expression of the will of the popula-

tion inhabiting these territories in view of the ruthless methods applied there today and those that have been applied in the past by consecutive occupants.

Recalling the confidential memorandum handed over to Mr. Eden before his departure for the Moscow Conference, the Polish government gives below a main outline of instructions that have been issued recently to the underground organization in Poland.

A rising in Poland against Germany is being planned to break out at a moment mutually agreed upon with our Allies either before, or at the very moment of, the entry of Soviet troops into Poland.

In accordance with the principles adopted in Quebec the Polish government are entitled to exert sovereign authority over Polish lands as they are liberated from the enemy. Consequently, in case the entry of Soviet troops into Poland takes place after the reestablishment of Polish-Soviet relations, the Polish government would be anxious, as they have already informed the British government, to return immediately to Poland together with the Commander in Chief and to cooperate there in the further struggle against Germany.

The entry of Soviet troops on Polish territory without previous resumption of Polish-Soviet relations would force the Polish government to undertake political action against the violation of Polish sovereignty while the Polish local administration and army in Poland would have to continue to work underground. In that case the Polish government foresee the use of measures of self-defense wherever such measures are rendered indispensable by Soviet methods of terror and extermination of Polish citizens.

The Moscow conference, as appears from information offered by Mr. Eden, has not brought the question of the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations nearer a satisfactory conclusion. In the meantime the situation on the eastern front indicates that Soviet troops may be expected soon to cross the borders of Poland. The Polish government have, moreover, reasons to fear that in present conditions the life and property of Polish citizens may be exposed to danger after the entry of Soviet troops into Poland and the imposing on the country of Soviet administration. In that case desperate reaction of the Polish community may be expected, following the violation of the principle adopted in Quebec, assuring to the United Nations their liberty and their own administration.

The principles foreseen in the case of Italy by the Moscow conference could by no means be satisfactory for Poland. The administration carried out in Poland by a commander of Soviet troops, even with the cooperation of British and American liaison officers, would place Poland, an Allied country, on the same level as Italy, an enemy country; in practice the cooperation of a limited number of British and American liaison officers could not be a safeguard for the interests of the Polish population in the territories occupied by Soviet troops.

In this situation the Polish government address a pressing appeal to Mr. Churchill to intervene with Marshal Stalin, with the view to restoring Polish-Soviet relations, safeguarding the interests of the Polish State and the life and property of its citizens after the Soviet troops have entered Poland.

Polish airmen, sailors, and soldiers in carrying out the fight against the common enemy must be assured that their families will be restored to them and that they can expect to return to a free and independent homeland.

London, November 16, 1943

11. *Mikołajczyk's response on December 6, 1943, to Teheran:*

Poland, which has been fighting the Germans the longest and the most unyieldingly, is awaiting the moment of liberation with special longing. The Declaration of the Three Powers, confirming the agreement on war strategy with a view to destroying the German war machine, forecasts a speedy end to the war in Europe.

It [peace] will be all the more lasting—as the Declaration of these Three Powers states—if real cooperation and active participation by the great nations and the small exists among the family of democratic nations.

In particular, the determination to keep to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and eliminate tyranny, slavery, intolerance, and oppression awakened a deep echo in Polish hearts. Through her struggle Poland has proclaimed her membership in the world family of democratic nations, from which tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance will be driven out.

We also express the conviction that in the liberated territories these democratic principles will be put into effect immediately. We greet with especial joy the Declaration concerning Iran [an appendix to the short Teheran Declaration], taking her contribution to the common cause into consideration and guaranteeing her independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; for in that declaration, as in the resolutions taken by the conference concerning the Pacific, guaranteeing to China the return of all territories stolen from her, we see the fulfillment of the basic conditions for true peace, which, if it is to be lasting, cannot be built on any wrongs, including territorial wrongs. I am convinced that these precedents, repeated in other cases, will give the best results in building a lasting peace and unity among the nations after the war.

12. *Excerpts from Mikołajczyk's speech, December 9, 1943, after Teheran:*

. . . I may add here that four months ago German Governor General Frank approached one of my countrymen in Poland, requesting him to get in touch with the directorate of the underground movement and propose to them that in view of the threatened invasion by the Soviet armies they should cease the struggle against Germany.

Frank said he knew that the systematic sabotage was being organized primarily by the Polish underground forces and that the Germans would be ready to change their conduct in Poland if the underground struggle were to be called off.

At the same time he threatened that reprisal measures would be intensified if the struggle did not cease. Subsequently, the *Wehrmacht* demanded that the S.S. should be removed from the *Generalgouvernement* on the grounds that, in view of the growing sabotage, it was proving incapable of ensuring security in the rear of the German armies. Himmler considered it necessary to visit Poland personally, and today in the streets of all Polish villages, towns, and cities public executions are taking place, carried out jointly by the S.S. and the *Wehrmacht* in an attempt to terrorize the Poles and crush the underground struggle. They even had to call in the help of the German Air Force.

The Poles—called by Frank “a nation of idiots”—will not yield. As they began their

struggle in 1939, so they desire to end it by an open and general rising against the Germans, just before their collapse on the eastern front. They are determined to do this even if, in the fifth year of war, their Allies should fail to supply them with the arms needed for the final struggle. They will do it in spite of their profound anxiety concerning the fate awaiting them when the Soviet armies enter Polish territory—anxiety justified by the rupture of Polish-Soviet relations and by the threats made in certain Communist papers published in Polish, announcing a bloody reckoning with the organized underground movement in Poland.

The daily communion with death has produced, on the one hand, a contempt for death and determination to continue the struggle to the end, and on the other, an unshakable conviction that at long last justice will prevail. The Poles look forward to a complete defeat of Germany . . . and to seeing Poland's peace and security safeguarded by the restoration of the territories rightly belonging to her.

That is why no one in underground Poland can understand how some organs of the press, even in the Allied countries, can discuss the possibility that in addition to the sacrifices already made, the Poles should have to give up their prewar frontiers, or how these papers can advocate a new partition of Poland and the cession of more than half her national territory as far as the line, which in 1941 represented the frontier between Germany and Russia—a line fixed by violence and the trampling down of solemn international treaties.

13. Miłojczyński's broadcast of January 5, 1944, the day the Russians crossed the border into Poland in pursuit of the Nazis:

Poles!

We are reaching a turning point of history.

According to the dispatches from Moscow, the Soviet forces, advancing in bitter and victorious fighting against the Germans, have crossed the Polish frontier.

The defeat of our mortal enemies, the Germans, against whom we have been fighting without respite since September 1, 1939, draws closer and closer. It inspires us with hopes of prompt liberation, and it brings nearer the moment of our final reckoning with the Germans, which will come irrespective of the political situation.

We should have preferred to meet the Soviet troops not merely as allies of our allies, fighting against the common enemy, but as our own allies as well.

You know the policy of our government, expressed in the instruction of October 27, 1943, in which the government ordered the underground authorities in Poland:

. . . to augment the existing plan of general, organized, and relentless resistance against the Germans and the intensification of the struggle against enemy forces;

. . . to avoid all conflicts that might possibly arise in view of the absence of Polish-Soviet relations;

. . . to establish cooperation with the Soviet commanders, if such relations should be resumed.

We also know that the responsible leaders of the directorate of the resistance have received these orders.

. . . We shall deal with the enemy within our means and possibilities, without resting until they are finally defeated.

Strong with the imperishable right of Poland to independence, and with the declarations and obligations of our Allies and of the United Nations, we demand respect for the rights and interests of the Polish Republic, its supreme authorities, and its citizens in any war situation and at any stage of the development of the international political situation.

We are carrying out our duty, and we claim recognition and respect for our rights. That is all. Acting as we are, we are entitled to believe firmly that in the struggle in which we are facing hate, violence, murder and robbery—while we have on our side the eternal principles of morality, justice and law, as well as those of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms—Poland will find strength, freedom, and independence.

I am convinced that you will keep your calm, your determination, discipline, and solidarity in carrying out the orders of the Polish government and of the directorate of the underground resistance in the moment of the most severe trial and the final round of the fight against the Germans.

The moment has come when I may reveal to you certain decisions taken by the Polish government in close consultations with the people of Poland, but which had to remain secret until today.

The whole world knows that the Hitlerite rule in Poland is only surface deep. The Germans have never managed to master your hearts and thoughts, nor to make you their servants. In the Polish underground there exists a complete Polish state, fully organized at all the levels of state administration—political, military, social, and economic. The highest authorities of that state, acting abroad on its behalf, are resident in London.

The Polish state has never ceased to exist. All that happened was that its organs had to become secret, under the pressure of events, with the exception of those that had to remain in the open for the purpose of carrying their duties outside the country.

Acting in consultation with our authorities in Poland I submitted to the cabinet—I was then Home Secretary—the draft of a Decree concerning the temporary organization of administration of the territories of the Polish Republic, which was duly signed on September 1, 1942, by the President, by Premier Sikorski, and by all the members of the government.

In making public the existence of such a Decree, we desire to inform the Polish citizens in the home country about the legal foundations of the authority and competence of that member of the Polish cabinet who, as Deputy Prime Minister, is charged with the duties of delegate of the Polish government in Poland. He has authority to carry out all the functions of the government concerning home administration.

The delegate of the government carries out his duties in accordance with the orders and instructions of the government of the Republic with the assistance of his office and its network of administrative offices, acting in close cooperation with the Polish Political Representation and the Commander of the Polish secret army.

Thus the hard state duty of securing the continuity of the legal government in underground Poland is carried on.

The delegate of the government in Poland, appointed by the President of Poland as a member of the Cabinet, carries out in Poland, until the return of the Prime Minister,

the duties of acting Prime Minister, just as the Deputy Prime Minister does in London during the absence of the Prime Minister.

The Minister Delegate of the government in Poland will reveal his name and official residence at the appropriate moment. Now you are familiar with his declarations and instructions, bearing the signature of delegate of the Government. I am convinced that they will remain obeyed by you as scrupulously as they have hitherto been and that the sense of responsibility of the citizens of Poland will continue now as during the worst moments of the occupation.

Citizens of Poland! Every one of you, even in the most distant part of Poland, knows his rights and duties. You have received instructions. Performing them obediently and solidly with determination and calm in the coming days of ultimate trial, you will perform your duties fighting for right. You will be fighting for a strong, free, independent Poland, and in it a free and happy citizenry.

14. *Russian statement, January 11, 1944, on Polish émigré government's claims in eastern Poland:*

On January 5, in London, a declaration of the *émigré* Polish Government was published on the question of Soviet-Polish relations, which contains a number of incorrect assertions, including an incorrect assertion about the Soviet-Polish frontier.

As is known, the Soviet constitution established the Soviet-Polish border in accordance with the will of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, as expressed in a plebiscite which was carried out on a broad democratic basis in 1939. The territories of Western Ukraine, in which Ukrainians comprise the overwhelming majority of the population, were then incorporated in Soviet Ukraine, and the territories of Western Byelorussia, in which Byelorussians constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, were incorporated in Soviet Byelorussia.

The injustice committed by the Riga Treaty of 1921 which was imposed upon the Soviet Union, was in this way rectified.

The Soviet Government has repeatedly declared that it stands for the re-establishment of a strong and independent Poland and for friendship between the Soviet Union and Poland. The Soviet Government once again declares that it is seeking to establish friendship between the U.S.S.R. and Poland on the basis of stable good-neighborly relations and mutual respect and, if the Polish people so desire, on the basis of an alliance of mutual assistance against the Germans as the main enemies of the Soviet Union and of Poland. The realization of this task could be served by Poland's joining in the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Post-War Collaboration.

The self-sacrificing struggle of the Red Army and the developing military operations of our Allies bring nearer the utter defeat of the Hitlerite war machine and are bringing Poland and other peoples liberation from the yoke of German invaders.

The "Union of Polish Patriots in the U.S.S.R." and the Polish Army Corps formed by it, which is operating at the front against the Germans hand in hand with the Red Army, are already carrying out glorious tasks in this struggle for liberation.

The possibility of the regeneration of Poland as a strong and independent State now presents itself. But Poland must be reborn, not by means of the seizure of Ukrainian

and Byelorussian lands, but through the restoration to Poland of ancient Polish lands which were wrested from her by the Germans. Only in this way would it be possible to reestablish trust and friendship between the Polish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Russian peoples.

Poland's eastern frontiers can be established by agreement with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government does not regard the 1939 frontiers as unalterable. Those frontiers can be modified in Poland's favor so that areas in which the Polish population forms the majority be turned over to Poland. In this case the Soviet-Polish frontier could pass approximately along the so-called Curzon Line which was adopted in 1919 by the Supreme Council of Allied Powers and which provides for the inclusion of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia in the Soviet Union.

Poland's western borders must be extended through the incorporation of ancient Polish lands previously wrested by Germany, without which it is impossible to unite the whole Polish people in its State, which thereby will receive the necessary outlet to the Baltic Sea. The just aspiration of the Polish people for its full reunion in a strong and independent State must receive recognition and support.

The *émigré* Polish Government, isolated from its people, has proved incapable of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union. It has also proved incapable of organizing an active struggle against the German invaders in Poland itself. Furthermore, by its incorrect policy it not infrequently plays into the hands of the German invaders.

However, the interests of Poland and of the Soviet Union require that friendly relations be established between our countries, and that the people of Poland and of the Soviet Union should unite in the struggle against the common external enemy, as is demanded by the Common cause of all the Allies.

15. *Polish Government's note to Great Britain, January 16, 1944:*

CONFIDENTIAL

16th January, 1944

Sir:

The recent exchange of Polish and Soviet public declarations has so far led to the Polish government approaching the British and United States governments with a view to securing through their intermediary the discussion by the Polish and Soviet governments with the participation of the British and American governments of all outstanding questions, the settlement of which should lead to a friendly and permanent cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union. The question whether such a discussion can be initiated, and if so, brought to a successful conclusion still remains open.

In these circumstances I have been instructed to place before His Majesty's Government confidentially the most urgent requirements of the Polish government in connection with the fact of the crossing of the Polish frontier by Soviet troops, requirements which have already been in part communicated to His Majesty's Government on previous occasions.

1. The successful progress of the Soviet offensive makes it probable that soon it may

become possible and opportune for the Polish government to issue orders foreseen in their instructions of October 27, 1943, for the launching of military action on the largest scale by the underground Polish forces behind the lines of the German Army retreating across occupied Poland. Such action, in case it is adequately supported from outside, may have an important bearing, not only on the liberation of Polish territory from the enemy, but also on the speeding up of his ultimate defeat. The Polish government feels, therefore, compelled to stress once more most earnestly the necessity for, and the exceptional urgency of, supplying the Polish underground army with indispensable arms in accordance with the plans prepared for such emergency.

2. The Soviet forces have crossed the Polish frontier in the course of their fight with the common enemy but without agreement with the Polish government having been reached, and the political designs of the Soviet government disclosed designs, on which a number of symptoms and indirect pronouncements have shed a highly disquieting light.

The Polish government are on that account compelled to issue a protest safeguarding the territorial status of the Polish Republic, based on valid international treaties, against the political and legal consequences of possible unilateral decisions on *fais accomplis*.

The Polish government do not doubt that their point of view will find full recognition on the part of His Majesty's Government in whose name the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill issued in the House of Commons on September 5, 1940, the following declaration:

"We have not at any time adopted since this war broke out the line that nothing could be changed in the territorial structure of various countries. On the other hand, we do not propose to recognize any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned."

3. As the liberation of the territory of the Polish Republic from under German occupation progresses and military operations connected with it are brought nearer their end, there will arise the absolute necessity for the speedy reestablishment of a Polish administration in conformity with the principles laid down by the conference of Quebec. The Polish underground movement, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister resident in Poland and by the Commander in Chief of the army of the homeland, is prepared, according to instructions issued by the Polish government, to make itself known and to take over the government of the country. The Polish government and the Commander in Chief of the Polish armed forces are also prepared to return at any moment to the liberated areas of the country.

The Polish government are looking forward to His Majesty's Government for support and the necessary facilities in this respect and also for cooperation in opposing possible attempts at violating Poland's sovereignty through forcing upon her illegal authorities by means of external pressure.

4. The progress of Soviet troops inside Polish territory is raising the urgent problem of the security of the Polish underground movement and of life and property of the people of Poland. This problem is singled out by the Polish government from amongst those that demand immediate settlement, not only in the Polish interest but also in that of all the United Nations.

The Polish government deem it indispensable to call His Majesty's Government's attention to this question, whatever may be the result of discussions thereon by the

Polish-Soviet governments with the participation of the British and American governments, as it appears from a code received from Poland on January 14 of this year, the Polish underground army has obtained possession of the following order issued from Moscow to Soviet partisans on Polish territory:

"In conformity with Comrade Nozenko's instructions all partisans are ordered to disarm Polish units. All who resist are to be shot on the spot. All organizations to be liquidated and their leaders shot.

Signed:
Dubov"

The issuing of such an order calls for immediate intervention with the Soviet authorities in order that the information may be verified, and serious consequences, which would otherwise be likely to arise, may be avoided.

If I am taking the liberty of approaching you with the Polish government's request that you should consent to act as intermediary in this particular question, it is because my government are convinced of the necessity . . . to establish as speedily as possible by means of an international agreement the principles and guarantees assuring the security of the Polish underground movement and also the life and property of the Polish population.

In this connection the Polish government reiterate their conviction that the sole, real guarantee of such a security can be assured only if, together with Soviet troops entering Poland in the course of their war operations against Germany (and solely for as long as these operations last), Polish, British, and American troops should simultaneously enter Poland. The Polish government believe that at the same time the necessity will arise for the immediate appointment to the headquarters of the Soviet occupying forces of military representatives of Great Britain and the United States.

The Polish government confidently expect that the British government will concur in their views and that they will see their way to dispatching British troops to Poland. . . .

The Polish government would finally attach great importance to the assuring of access, to the regions of Poland liberated from the enemy, of representatives of the Polish Red Cross in order that they may immediately undertake the organization of relief with regard to nourishment, clothing, and medical supplies for the Polish population, and especially for Polish children who need it so urgently.

I have the honor to be. . . .

16. Second note to British Foreign Office:

SECRET

23rd January, 1944

Referring to the conversations that have taken place recently between members of the Polish and British governments regarding the problem of Polish-Soviet relations, and more particularly, the conversations held with you on January 13 last and with Mr. Churchill on January 20, I have been instructed to place before you a number of questions, the answers to which cannot fail to have an important bearing on the decisions that the Polish government is called upon to make in the present situation. The views of His

Majesty's Government on several of the questions enumerated below have been expressed in the course of mutual conversations. The Polish government would, however, be greatly obliged to you if you would see your way, also, with regard to these questions to confirm that they have been recorded and interpreted correctly.

1. What are the measures that the British government would be prepared to take in the event of a Polish-Soviet agreement being reached on the basis of Mr. Churchill's suggestions made to M. Mikolajczyk on January 20 in order to safeguard the independence of Poland and the noninterference by the Soviet government in Poland's internal affairs? In particular:

- (a) Can the British government assure the taking over by the Polish government, and authorities appointed by them, of the administration of Polish territory as it is freed from German occupation?
- (b) Are His Majesty's Government prepared to secure from the Soviet government their agreement to the participation of Polish and Allied contingents of an equal footing and in comparable numbers in the occupation of Polish territories (including those that would be attributed to Poland at the expense of Germany), should such an occupation be made necessary by the course of military operations against Germany?
- (c) Can they undertake to assure that this territory will be duly evacuated by the occupying troops and authorities as soon as military operations against Germany have come to an end on this front?

2. Are the Polish government right in expecting:

- (a) A formal guarantee by Great Britain and, if obtainable, also by the United States of America of the territorial integrity of Poland within her new frontiers, of her political independence, and noninterference in her internal affairs against attempts from any quarter whatsoever?
- (b) Should the United States prove unwilling to join in such a guarantee, would Great Britain be willing to undertake it herself?

3. Can the Polish government receive the assurance that neither of the Three Great Powers represented at the Teheran conference will claim military, naval, or aerial bases on the territory of Poland or on that which would be allotted to Poland by way of compensation at the expense of Germany?

4. Can the Polish government take it for granted with regard to territories offered to Poland at the expense of Germany, that:

- (a) They comprise with the full consent of the British government all German territories situated between the river Oder and the Polish-German frontier of 1939, and over and above the whole of Opole Silesia, the territory of the Free City of Danzig, and the entire territory of East Prussia?
- (b) Poland's new western frontiers will be definitely fixed at the same time as Poland's eastern frontiers and embodied in one international document enacted on the same basis with the participation and consent of the British, the Soviet, and the American governments?
- (c) It will be stipulated that the arrangement is to be considered permanent and that no ulterior German protests would be entertained?
- (d) The German territories allotted to Poland on the basis of this agreement will be

formally declared as severed from the German Reich in the terms of the first armistice terminating hostilities between the United Countries and Germany, this surrender being a *sine qua non* condition of the termination of hostilities?

- (c) The Three Great Powers represented in the Teheian conference will undertake to impose upon Germany in the same armistice the duty of accepting on German territory, without undue delay, the entire population of German tongue inhabiting at the moment of the signature of the armistice the territory of Poland within her new frontiers? These Powers will also undertake to assist Poland in the removal from her territory of unwanted Germans?

5. The Polish government would finally be grateful to the British government for their views on the means, which they would deem proper, to assure protection of Polish citizens who are now, or may find themselves at a later date, residing on territories under Soviet authority; are they right in expecting to receive guarantees assuring the repatriation to Poland from the USSR of all her citizens entitled thereto?

I remain. . .

17. *Roosevelt offers good will on February 1, 1944:*

1. The basic position of the United States Government that general discussions of the many European frontier questions during the period of active hostilities will run the risk of creating confusion and diverting concentration from the over-all objective of defeating Germany is well known. This attitude, however, does not preclude the possibility of any two countries having mutual territorial problems from seeking a direct settlement by mutual accord. This Government recognizes that recent developments present certain complex and vital considerations which may render it desirable for the Polish Government to endeavor to reach a solution with regard to its territory without delay.

2. The United States Government would in principle be prepared to assist in helping the Polish Government freely to reach a settlement of its territorial problems through the offer of good offices to the Polish and to the Soviet Governments to facilitate direct discussions between them. While this Government is not in a position to guarantee such a settlement, it would welcome the achievement of a solution by friendly accord.

3. The United States Government is prepared to lend its support to Prime Minister Churchill's endeavors to bring about the re-establishment of relations between the Polish and Soviet Governments on the basis of a friendly solution of all outstanding difficulties. As stated above, there can be no question of guarantees as far as the United States is concerned.

18. *Polish reply to Churchill, February 15, 1944, on demarcation line in east:*

The Polish government is ready to start conversations with the Soviet government, with the cooperation of the British and American governments, on all outstanding questions. We do not exclude frontier discussions relating to the east, west, and north.

The dictatorial demand by the USSR that we must agree in advance to the recognition

of the Curzon line as the future Polish frontier cannot be accepted by the Polish government. The result of conversations concerning frontiers can be realized only after the end of the war.

During war hostilities, we could consent to a *demarcation line* running east of Vilna and Lwów. The territory west of this demarcation line, after this territory is freed from German occupation, should be taken over by the Polish government. The territory east of the demarcation line should go to the administration of the Soviet military authorities, with the full participation of representatives of all Allied Powers.

The Polish government considers it a duty to state that the intention of incorporation into the Soviet Union of a part of East Prussia with Königsberg is against the interests of the Polish state and painfully restrains her free access to the sea.

Any changes in the Polish government, or changes relating to the Commander in Chief of its armed forces, cannot be dictated by a foreign power.

19. *Mikołajczyk's letter to Roosevelt:*

Mr. President:

Owing to circumstances, I am temporarily unable personally to present to you my views at this time so critical for Poland and, indeed, for the problems of peace. I therefore avail myself of the opportunity of the return to his post of Ambassador Ciechanowski to send you this personal letter.

In the first place, I should like, Mr. President, to express to you on behalf of the Polish government and on my own our deepest gratitude for your friendly and abiding interest in the fate of Poland. Your interest is one of the most important factors in maintaining the morale of the Polish nation and its indomitable resistance in the face of inhuman oppression.

I need hardly stress that the Polish people regard you, Mr. President, and the American people as the trustees of the principles for the triumph of which our United Nations' camp is fighting.

I am fully conscious of the considerations which, for the time being, prevent the United States government from publicly defining its stand on particular European problems. My urgent desire to pay you a personal visit at this time was not inspired by the intention of appealing to you to do so. I am, however, most anxious to have an early opportunity, at your convenience, frankly and confidentially to discuss with you the essential aspects of the problems of Poland, justly regarded as the test case of the great issues involved. Moreover, my visit would assure the Polish people, especially at this crucial moment, that their government continues to act in closest contact and understanding both with the United States and Great Britain.

I will not enter into a detailed recapitulation of the course of events relating to the difficulties encountered in our attempts to find a solution of the outstanding differences existing between the Soviet and Polish governments. I know that you are fully conversant with all these developments and that Prime Minister Churchill is keeping you informed about his untiring efforts at mediation between the Polish government and the Soviet government, which he has kindly undertaken at our request.

The Polish government sincerely tends to reach an understanding with the Soviet government, which would allow their fullest and most effective joint action against the common enemy, thus forming a solid basis for postwar neighborly collaboration. The Polish government considers that, in its efforts to achieve this aim, it has gone as far as a constitutional government, conscious of its duties and of its responsibilities to its nation, can go. Our government has always acted in closest understanding with, and within, the limits defined by the Polish nation. Only thus can our government conserve its full value for the United Nations including the USSR.

I am sure that you will agree at this time, when the whole future of mankind is involved, that it is imperative to face reality in a spirit of sincerity and truth, on which alone the future of international relations and durable peace can be founded.

I am firmly convinced that Nazi totalitarianism and its drive for world mastery shall be destroyed. But will not Poland and later Europe be overwhelmed against their will by a new wave of Communist totalitarianism? Can the nations condemned to the rule of such a new totalitarianism agree to accept its tyranny?

Never, as far as Poland is concerned.

The masses of Polish small farmers, anxious to build their prosperity not in collective farms but in individual farmsteads, will never agree to it. The feelings of the Polish working classes are best reflected in the enclosed letter addressed by them to Mr. Attlee, the British Deputy Prime Minister, which is worded with the urgency of despair.

All the classes of the Polish nation want to build a better future for the country and its citizens on a basis of private enterprise, supplemented by state economic planning and economic, social, and political self-government. The views of the population of Poland are best expressed in the enclosed messages received by me from Poland, dated January 6, January 15, and February 15, 1944.

The present war has proved that wars cannot be localized. The development of technical means of total war makes it impossible, even for the strongest power, to win a world war singlehanded. Collaboration of all of us is indispensable if autocratic systems are to disappear and nationalisms are to be reduced. Political and economic collaboration must be closer than before to bring about the establishment of the future world order. That is why the coordination of the policy of the great powers and their collaboration with the smaller powers already in the course of the war is so important to the future peace.

The responsibility of the great Powers will be ever greater, inasmuch as they will be called upon to safeguard, apart from their own security, that of smaller nations, their freedom, and especially the freedom of the individual throughout the world.

To achieve this aim it appears to me essential to realize the full truth of the existing situation.

Unfortunately, public opinion is frequently being led to accept entirely false views on Europe, and particularly on Poland.

I fully share the admiration inspired by the heroism of Soviet soldiers fighting in the defense of their country against the German invader. I also appreciate the realism of Marshal Stalin whose word can limit the political aims of world communism.

I am afraid, however, that public opinion may be bitterly disappointed should it discover that the widely publicized social changes and the alleged democratization of the Soviet Union are in fact but a combination of old Russian imperialism with Commu-

nist totalitarianism, which has not abandoned its former ambition for world rule.

Therefore it appears to me wrong to lead public opinion to believe that democracy exists where in reality it does not, and cannot, exist for a long time, as this is fraught with the danger of causing deep disillusionment and even unhappiness in nations who may be subjected to a rule that, while recognizing the freedom of the state, denies that of the individual.

It may also create disillusionment in business circles that expect freedom of trade relations in the future. The deepest disappointment, however, will be that of the working classes now rightly impressed by the fighting valor of the Soviet people but misled to believe that labor's greatest aspirations and democratic ideals have been achieved in the Soviet Union.

I regard the maintenance of Allied solidarity as essential and imperative in our common fight.

I therefore observe with profound misgiving the activity of German propaganda, hitherto completely disbelieved, which now succeeds in rebuilding the German morale—shattered by military defeats—by attempting to prove that the Allies are aiming not only at solidarity in battle but also at a compromise that would open the door of Europe to communism.

It is difficult to estimate how far the declared Soviet intentions toward Poland and the Baltic countries have already influenced the attitude of Turkey and Finland, thus affecting directly military operations. It is likewise difficult to say what consequences it may cause in European countries under German occupation.

One thing is certain—Nazi-occupied Europe was decidedly anti-German, and the hope of its rapid regeneration after its liberation was justified. The activities of Communist agencies brought about disunity and fear of chaos, for these agencies have endeavored in every country to achieve supremacy, less for the purpose of strengthening the struggle against the Germans than for that of establishing communism in the countries concerned.

The concealment of truth on which this situation is based is more detrimental to the Polish nation than to others. Once more I must stress that I am most anxious to preserve Allied unity. History will reveal how—in spite of violent criticisms of the Polish opposition at home and abroad—General Sikorski's and my own cabinet have refrained from publishing the true facts, which would have enlightened public opinion regarding Poland's situation and the methods used by Russia in her dealings and her intentions as regards my country. We have refrained from publishing such facts, although this is clearly against our interests, because we were anxious to reach an understanding with the USSR and to safeguard the unity of the Allies. Our reticence is, however, exploited by Russia, thus placing us in an intolerable position. Thus, the Polish government, responsible for the welfare of our country, is deprived of the elementary right of defense of its national interests and the right of the weaker to appeal for help to the stronger in the name of the principles and ideals enunciated by you, Mr. President, in the Atlantic Charter, the Four Freedoms, and many other statements that have won the respect and approval of the entire world.

The accusation of collaboration with the enemy, applied to the Polish nation and to the leaders of its underground movement fighting the Germans in conditions of extreme hardship, is monstrous. Coming from those who partitioned Poland in 1939 together with the Germans, it is a brutal insult to those who fight and die in the under-

ground battle of Poland and are guilty of no other crime than the refusal to turn Poland into a Communist country.

The accusation that the Polish government is undemocratic, when in reality it is composed of men who by their origins and by their lifelong struggle for democracy have proved their sincere attachment to democratic ideals, is slanderous. It is a serious wrong to insult that government which enjoys the confidence of its nation and is its expression, merely because it refuses to countenance the cession of 11,000,000 of its citizens to a country where individual freedom is unknown. Nor can one blame it for refusing to hand over half its national territory, to agree to the transfer from eastern Poland of at least five million Poles in exchange for the transfer of millions of Germans, or because it apprehends the prospect of a turning tide, which within fifty years or so, in accordance with the changing European political situation, may once more cause the shifting of populations on its territory.

It is the greatest insult to accuse the Polish soldiers who have fought since 1939 in Poland, France, Norway, Africa, and Italy—in the Battle of Britain in the air, and on the Seven Seas—of a lack of fighting spirit. While American and British soldiers are rightly promised . . . employment and better conditions after their return home, the Polish soldiers, airmen, and sailors, who come from eastern Poland, are told that they may never be allowed to return to their homes and their families.

- Mr. President, the Polish people, oppressed on the one hand and tempted on the other, cannot understand why its great sacrifices appear to have been forgotten. It does not claim payment or reward but only justice. It still believes that the rights of the weak will be respected by the powerful.

The Polish nation cannot understand why, in the fifth year of war, it does not receive sufficient armament and supplies for its underground struggle, at a time when Allied mass production of aircraft and weapons has reached a wonderful peak and the contribution of the Polish underground army can be of considerable importance. Poland needs these weapons for its final struggle against the Germans. Moreover, she justly fears that, while she may be prevented by lack of weapons to rise at the appointed hour fully armed against the common foe and to finish the fight she has carried on since 1939, she may be accused of not wanting to fight to the end.

In fact, the supply of equipment for the Polish underground army has been virtually stopped since the autumn of 1943, and only a fraction of the planned 300 flights was carried out.

Mr. President, your name is revered by every Pole. The Polish nation looks upon you as the champion of the principles that you have proclaimed with such deep faith and conviction, presenting to mankind a vision of human freedom in a better world.

Our people fighting in Poland's underground army have lost everything. They lay no value on life. They may not reckon sufficiently with realism while being threatened with the loss of their last hope of freedom and by the prospect of another enslavement. They have faith in you, Mr. President. I am convinced that their faith will be justified.

At the present moment the situation in Poland can be summed up as follows: As far as the attachment to principles is concerned, the Polish nation is united and unflinching.

Its attitude toward the war is expressed in the following points:

1. Poland is determined to carry on to the end the struggle against the Germans and asks for adequate supplies of arms and equipment for that purpose.

2. The Polish people decided, in full agreement with the Polish government and on its instructions, that our underground army will come out into the open and offer its collaboration against the Germans to the Soviet armed forces as they enter Poland, even if diplomatic relations between the Polish and Russian governments are not resumed. The Polish underground took this decision although it is aware of the dangers resulting from disclosing its organization to the Soviets.

I hope that you will kindly forgive this very frank and long letter at this tragic moment for my country. On behalf of the Polish nation and government I appeal to you, Mr. President, to do all in your power to prevent the creation in Poland of accomplished facts; to safeguard the sovereign rights of the Polish state and of its lawful authorities; to ensure the respect and safety of the lives and property of Polish citizens; to safeguard the Polish underground army and administration from the dangers that threaten them after their disclosure to the Soviet forces.

I am convinced that in your great wisdom and statesmanship, and in the realization that the case of Poland has a direct bearing on the future peace, you will find the best way to give support to her just cause.

Accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

St. Mikołajczyk

7 enclosures

20. *Two of the enclosures included in my letter to Roosevelt: the first, a Message Directed to the Peoples of the World; the second, the underground's reply to Churchill.*

To the Peoples of the World:

On the eve of the decisive blow of the Allied forces, and of their conclusive battles with the Germans, in which, on the side of our Western Allies, Polish forces in Poland and abroad will also play their part, the world should realize the situation of the Polish nation, as it is, after four years of German occupation, and the part it has been playing in this war, its moral strength, its aims and its hopes.

We opposed the Hitlerite invader, fully aware of the heavy responsibilities this would entail, and we do not ask for sympathy when we state the price we paid for our love of freedom. During this war some five million Polish citizens were killed in Poland by the enemy. About three millions were deported for slavery to the East or West. Hundreds of thousands were put into prison or concentration camps where the majority of them have perished already. Many thousands were shot or tortured to death in Gestapo torture chambers. Hundreds of villages were burnt down with their inhabitants and razed to the ground. There is not one family which would not mourn the death of one of its members; there is not one home that would not grieve over some next of kin.

We have paid this heavy price, because we abided by our country and by the terms of our alliance, and would not accept any form of collaboration with the invader. We remained Poles, citizens of our country, loyal to our government which, though in exile, has maintained its bonds with the home country. Here, in Poland, we have rebuilt underground all the forms of our public life: an Executive of our government, an Underground Army, Civil Resistance, a representative body of our political parties, abundant

secret newspapers, and secret cultural life. The Home Political Representation, formed a couple of years ago, is composed of the representatives of four main political parties, representing all the strata of the society and the principal trends of Polish political thought, acting on the basis of sovereignty of the Polish state.

The invaders meet everywhere these manifestations of our independent political existence and from the very beginning strive to break us by cruel terroristic methods. We give blow for blow. Though disarmed since the end of 1939, we do everything to make the Polish soil insecure to the enemy. Nazi tyrants fall by the hand of the Polish underground, trains are blown up, detachments of S.S. or other police formations are being destroyed.

A stubborn, constant, unwavering struggle against the Germans is taking place on the Polish soil. In order to keep down the country, the enemy has to maintain in Poland thousands of soldiers necessary for the Eastern front, policemen and administrative officials. This struggle is uneven. The nation, almost defenseless, opposes an enemy armed to the teeth. In consequence, over 14 per cent of the Polish population perished in that struggle. This sacrifice is all the greater when we consider the fact that the enemy persecutes the most active and valuable elements of the nation. Scientists, clergymen, artists, teachers, technicians, officers, intellectual workers of all kinds and the great mass of socially and politically active peasants and workers are the principal victims of the invader. The enemy deals his blows so that their consequences will be felt for long years. He applies everywhere the terrible principle of collective responsibility. And seeing how difficult it is to break our resistance he uses his bestiality to an extent unknown hitherto in the history of the world.

Mass executions, in which $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Jews perished, exceed by their cruelty the darkest legends of ancient times. The extreme sadism of public executions taking place in our country during the last two months has no example in the history of mankind. From October, 1943, in the streets of Warsaw and many other towns of Poland, the shooting of hostages is taking place. There are days when in Warsaw alone the Germans shoot in the streets and squares 270 men at a time. To heighten the terror loudspeakers repeat the names of the killed and give long lists of new "hostages" caught in the streets in daily man hunts. Every day large red posters are displayed with new names. In that manner, during a few weeks in Warsaw alone more than five thousand were put to death. Besides, prisoners confined in prisons or concentration camps are killed by shots fired from behind or are suffocated in gas chambers by a method that is four years old.

We are fully aware that the Germans are aiming, if not at the extermination of the whole Polish nation, at depriving it of strength and rendering it defenseless. Himmler announces further intensification of the terrorism against Poles: if the Germans are obliged to withdraw from our country, our towns and villages will be razed to the earth by the order of this hangman, and masses of the population, apart from those fit for physical work, are to be destroyed, the intellectual class first of all. This puts us in face of new unspeakable horrors and terrible dangers.

Before the eyes of the world there takes place this inhuman crime of exterminating the Polish nation. This crime is hanging over our daily life. Our duty is to make it known to the peoples of the world and to make them assist our nation which is struggling for its existence to the last drop of its blood. We ask you, peoples of the world, for help

in our struggle. We ask you to precipitate the military operations in order to shorten the time which the Germans use for exterminating us. We ask you to give support to our government and our army so that they might return as soon as possible to Poland and take part with the whole nation in the final struggle with the enemy. We ask you to deliver swiftly the arms necessary to the army fighting in our country (which may be joined tomorrow by all the Poles).

Facing the tragic moment of our history, when our nation is menaced by the loss of new millions of lives, we have the right to appeal to you, peoples of the world, to assure us that our sacrifice will not be in vain, that in the new postwar world the rights and interests of Poland will be respected, that Poland which holds the key position between the East and West and for centuries has been opposing the thrust of Prussianism to the East (and defending Western culture and civilization against the Eastern barbarism).

We, Poles, in face of most terrible dangers have the right to ask for the assurance: that our country will not be robbed of its territories; that no one will have the right to interfere in our internal affairs and that the rights of our government, which has a full support of Polish public opinion, will be respected; that the integrity and independence of the Polish state will be held sacred by the world, regardless of how many of us will still be alive after this war.

Such an assurance given by the nations of the world fighting for freedom and justice will strengthen our force in the struggle against the enemies of freedom.

National Party

Polish Peasant Party

Christian Labor Party

Central Committee of

Workers' Movement:

"Liberty, Equality,

Independence" Polish Socialist Party

constituting the Home Political Representation.

SECRET

TO: Prime Minister Mikołajczyk

Following the report received from you with regard to the proposals made by Prime Minister Churchill to the Polish Government:

1. We agree to the proposed Western boundaries and welcome the pledge of removing the Germans.

2. We do not agree to the tying up of our Eastern frontier with the question of our Western boundaries. The Western territories cannot be an equivalent as their reincorporation to Poland constitutes in fact the return of territories seized from her in the past.

3. We favor entering into conversations, with the participation of the Allies, with a view to the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviets, on condition of full respect of our sovereignty and of non-interference in our internal affairs.

4. We object firmly to any discussions with the Soviets with regard to the revision of the Eastern boundaries. We stand by the inviolability of the frontiers as settled by the Treaty of Riga, which was signed also by the representatives of the Ukraine, for the reason that the Soviets do not want frontier readjustments, just as the Danzig Corridor was not the real aim of the Germans, but an aim at the sovereignty and integrity of Poland.

5. No one in Poland would understand why Poland is to pay the Soviets the costs of war with her territories and her independence. And no one would understand why

Poland went to war against Germany and is waging it for the fifth year. Poland was first to oppose the German invaders, not only in defense of her independence, but also in defense of the freedom of Europe. She was called the inspiration of the world. Even now, in spite of enormous sacrifice, the Polish people are decided to fight against the new Soviet aggression in defense of their own independence and for the freedom of Europe. The Polish nation trusts that the Allies and the peoples of the world will understand their attitude and will support it actively.

6. There will be no peace in Europe if, instead of justice and right, violence and force were to triumph. The Polish nation will never surrender to violence and still believe in the bonds of alliance, and trust that, in the interest of all peace-loving peoples the principles of the Atlantic Charter will prevail. For this reason we are of the opinion that the settlement of essential problems should be postponed till that time.

7. We shall not break down nor shall we fail. On the contrary, general collapse and chaos would follow only the surrender to Soviet claims.

8. As we are fully aware of the real aims and methods of proceeding of our eastern neighbor we do not attach any serious importance to possible agreements with regard to the functioning of our authorities in the Soviet-occupied territories, because we do not believe that these agreements would be faithfully kept.

9. The Polish people are fully aware of the seriousness of the present moment, and the unity of their views and firm will to fight for the freedom, integrity and independence of their mother country are complete.

THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL UNITY

and

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLENIPOTENTIARY IN POLAND

Warsaw, February 15, 1944

21. *Roosevelt's reply of April 3, 1944:*

The White House
Washington
April 3, 1944

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I have read with interest your letter of March 18, which was delivered by Ambassador Ciechanowski, and I wish to thank you for your courtesy in explaining in such a frank manner your position and that of your colleagues on various problems confronting your Cabinet at this time.

In regard to your desire to come to Washington in order that we might discuss these various problems in person which you referred to in your letter and which your Ambassador reiterated to the Secretary of State, I feel that a useful purpose would be served by such discussions. As you have undoubtedly heard, however, I have been suffering from a slight case of bronchitis and my doctors impressed upon me the desirability of taking a rather extended rest. I purpose, therefore, to leave Washington shortly for a few weeks' rest. I have, moreover, already made plans for a visit by Prime Minister Curtin at the end of this month.

Under the circumstances I regret that I shall not be able to receive you sooner than

the early part of May. I hope you will be free to come at that time, and I will let you know as soon as I possibly can the exact date I will be free to see you.

Very sincerely yours,
Franklin D. Roosevelt

22. Roosevelt's letter of June 13, 1944, to Mikolajczyk after visit to White House:

The White House
Washington
June 13, 1944

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I wish to take this opportunity, just before your departure, to wish you a safe return after your most welcome visit to Washington.

I particularly desire to express to you the pleasure I have had in seeing you again, which enabled me to have most frank, sincere and friendly exchanges of views with you on the many questions which are of mutual interest to us.

I need hardly tell you how much the American people admire the courage and fortitude of the Polish people, who for almost five years have borne with brave and stout hearts the cruel hardships of war and oppression. Their steadfast determination to be free again and the indomitable spirit of their fighting men constitute the best pledge that Poland shall reassume her rightful place among the free nations of the world.

The forces of liberation are on the march to certain victory and the establishment of a peace based upon the principles of freedom, democracy, mutual understanding and security for all liberty-loving people.

Permit me to express again how much I appreciated the opportunity of renewing our acquaintance. I feel that such personal exchanges of views cannot but contribute to mutual understanding.

Very sincerely yours,
Franklin D. Roosevelt

23. Roosevelt's letter of August 24, 1944, about Anglo-American appeal to Stalin and Lublin Poles:

I received your letter of August 18, containing your urgent request for me to appeal to Marshal Stalin in order to obtain permission for flights of American planes to assist the heroic Warsaw garrison against the Nazis.

For your strictly confidential information I am glad to assure you that the United States Government has urged the Soviet Government to cooperate in getting aid to the Polish forces in Warsaw, and Mr. Churchill and I have addressed a personal message to Marshal Stalin expressing the hope that he will give immediate orders to drop supplies and munitions to the Polish forces in that city, or that he will agree to help our planes in this task.

I have not given up hope that our intervention will have the desired results.

In regard to the broader question of the solution of Polish-Soviet differences, I fully realize the difficulties which confront you, particularly in the light of the heroic and unequal struggle of the Warsaw garrison. I feel, however, that these unfortunate developments should not deter you from presenting reasonable proposals to the Polish Committee of National Liberation and I am of the firm opinion that if reasonable proposals are not presented to the Committee, and if a crisis should arise in the Polish Government, such developments could only worsen the situation.

24. Polish Government's post-war plan for new government, August 30, 1944:

After the liberation of the capital of Poland the Polish government will be reconstructed on the following lines:

The parties mentioned below will, in equal strength, form the basis of the government: the Peasant Party, the National Party, the Polish Socialist Party, the Christian Labor Party, and the Polish Workers' Communist Party.

The possibility of joining the government by representatives of the Fascist-minded and nondemocratic political groups, also by those responsible for the pre-September 1939 system of government, is ruled out.

Agreement between the Prime Minister and the political parties concerning the choice of candidates for the government from amongst these Parties will take place in Warsaw, and thereafter the President of the Republic will, on the motion of the Prime Minister, appoint a new government.

The program of the government will rest on the following basis:

The government will bring about the resumption of diplomatic relations between Poland and the USSR.

The government will immediately proceed to take over the administration of the liberated Polish lands and prepare the taking over of the new areas to be surrendered by Germany. To this end the government will conclude with the Soviet government an agreement with the view to defining the forms of collaboration with the Red Army in the military sphere. This agreement will be modelled on, and carried out in the spirit of, agreements concluded by the Allied Powers with the governments of the liberated countries of western Europe. The government will assure order in the rear of the Soviet Army.

All foreign troops will be withdrawn from Polish territories on the cessation of hostilities.

The government will, as soon as possible, arrange for the elections to the Constitutional Diet as well as for elections to the local government authorities on the basis of a decree providing for universal, equal, direct, secret, and proportional suffrage. Elections will take place as soon as normal conditions are established in the country.

The new democratic constitution will be passed immediately after the convocation of the Constitutional Diet. A new President of the Republic will be elected on the basis of this constitution.

The government will undertake the carrying out of social reforms based on the declarations of principles made during the period of occupation by the representatives

of the nation in the homeland and by the Polish government abroad. In particular, the agricultural reforms will be enacted without delay.

Until the convocation of the Constitutional Diet a National Council will be appointed to assist the government as an advisory body. It will be composed of representatives of the aforesaid five political parties, each of which will be represented by equal numbers. Smaller democratic political groups may also be represented on a correspondingly lesser scale.

The government will bring about an agreement with the Soviet government with the view to the joint prosecution of the war against Germany and the laying of foundations for a durable Polish-Soviet friendship after the war based on a Polish-Soviet alliance aiming at close political and economic collaboration between Poland and the USSR, while respecting the principle of the sovereignty of both states and of the mutual obligation of noninterference in the internal affairs of the other states. It will be the object of the alliances to devote constant care to the elimination of all German influence in central Europe and the prevention of the possibility of renewed German aggression.

This object will also be served by the alliance between Poland and Great Britain and France, by the conclusion of a Polish-Czechoslovakian alliance, and by the maintenance of the closest ties of friendship between Poland and the United States of America.

Poland would expect fully to participate in the planning for the safeguarding of peace by a system of general security of peace-loving nations. Also to take part in the occupation of Germany, especially of her eastern territories adjacent to the future western boundaries of Poland.

With regard to the settlement of the frontiers of Poland, the Polish government will act on the following principles agreed upon with the Soviet government in the spirit of friendship and the respect of the fundamental interests of the Polish nation.

Poland, which has made so many sacrifices in this war and is the only country under German occupation that produced no Quisling, cannot emerge from this war diminished in territory. In the east the main centers of Polish cultural life and the sources of raw materials indispensable to the economic life of the country shall remain within Polish boundaries. A final settlement of the Polish-Soviet frontier on the basis of these principles will be made by the Constitutional Diet in accordance with democratic principles.

All Germans will be removed from the territories incorporated into Poland in the north and the west by mutual Soviet-Polish cooperation.

Questions of citizenship and repatriation will be duly settled. Polish citizens who have been interned, arrested, or deported both in Poland and on territories of the USSR will immediately be released by the Soviet authorities who will assist in their repatriation.

A voluntary exchange of the Polish, White Russian, and Ukrainian population will be carried out.

The prosecution of the war and the general direction of all matters concerning the Polish armed forces will pass into the hands of the Polish government, who will form to this end a war cabinet. The latter will, in particular, be combatant in the following matters:

- (a) problems connected with the general prosecution of the war;
- (b) Polish-Soviet military collaboration;
- (c) Polish-British military collaboration;

- (d) military cooperation between Poland and other Allied nations; *✓*
- (e) unification of all armed forces of the Polish Republic.

The discussions of the war cabinet may be attended apart from Ministers appointed by the Council of Ministers, by the Chief of the General Staff, and, if necessary, by the chiefs of the services and the commanders of individual groups of the Polish armed forces.

The Polish armed forces will operate under Polish Command; in the eastern zone of operations under Soviet Supreme Operational Command; in other theaters of war under the Supreme Operational Allied Command of the respective area.

25. Miłojczyński's telegram to President Roosevelt, October, 1944:

Mr. President, you probably have heard of the recent transactions at Moscow from Ambassador Harriman, and you know of the great pressure put on us to recognize the Curzon line as the future frontier between Poland and Russia.

I think I have shown how diligently I have tried to reach a Polish-Russian agreement and how I wish to serve the cause of the Allies and the future peace. I think you appreciate, too, how terrible would be the injury to the Polish nation if, after all the losses it has suffered in this war, it would then be forced to suffer the loss of one-half its territory.

We cannot accept a plan that would deprive Poland of this land, which includes the only oil we have and the potash we need so critically because we are an agricultural nation. If my government did so agree, we would quickly lose the confidence of the Polish people and the Agreement would, in fact, cause tremendous disagreement.

I tried to persuade Marshal Stalin and Prime Minister Churchill to permit us to retain at least the Lwów area, with its oil and potash, for it is a region that never belonged to Russia. My efforts were in vain.

Before I make my final decision, I would like to know your attitude. I remember your own feelings about our retention of the Lwów area, as expressed at our last meeting. I still cannot believe what Molotov revealed about the secret decisions made by the Big Three at Teheran, in view of the assurances that you gave me at our last meeting.

If Russia takes Lwów and its oil, the production there will represent only about one per cent of the total oil production of the USSR. But it represents nearly one hundred per cent of Poland's oil. Our only source of potash is in that same region.

I understand how busy you are. I hope, however, that now when we must make such a tremendous decision, you will take the time to assert your great authority and influence in this matter. I can assure you that for helping us, the Polish nation will be eternally grateful, the cause of the Allies will be aided, and the future development of Europe enhanced.

26. Polish memorandum before Yalta, January 22, 1945:

The Polish government assumes that questions concerning Poland will be discussed during the pending meeting of the highest executives of the great Allied Powers. With

full confidence in the resolve of the Prime Minister of Great Britain to assure the Allied Polish Republic genuine independence and to guarantee its rights, the Polish government desires to take advantage of this occasion in order to state its views as follows:

The Polish government is of the opinion that the territorial question should be settled after termination of hostilities. In this matter the opinion of the Polish government coincides with the general principles enunciated by the governments of Great Britain and the USA.

The Polish government is prepared for friendly settlement of the Polish-Soviet dispute arising from claims of the USSR to eastern territories of the Polish Republic, and it will agree to any method provided for by international law, for a just and equitable settlement of the dispute with participation of both sides. Furthermore, the Polish government is determined to conclude an alliance with the USSR guaranteeing security of both states and to collaborate closely with the government of the USSR within the framework of a universal, international security organization, and within that, of an economic organization of states of central eastern Europe. However, as Poland, one of the United Nations, made immense sacrifices in material and spiritual values in the common struggle for the freedom of the world, lost nearly one-fifth of her population—killed in battles, massacred in penal camps and ghettos, perished in prisons, in banishment, and in forced-labor camps—the Polish government cannot be expected to recognize decisions unilaterally arrived at.

2. The Polish government is convinced that a simultaneous establishment and guarantee of the entire territorial status of the Polish Republic, settlement of the dispute with the USSR, allocation to Poland of territories situated north and west of her frontiers embracing lands to which she is justly entitled, assurance of her genuine independence and of full rights to organize her internal life in conformity with the will of the Polish nation untrammelled by any foreign intervention, are matters of vital importance, not only to Poland, but also affecting the whole of Europe.

3. If, in spite of the constant endeavors of the Polish government, the Soviet government should not agree to an understanding freely arrived at, the Polish government, desirous of assuring internal peace and liberty to the country, suggests that a military inter-Allied commission be set up, under control of which local Polish administration would discharge its functions until resumption of authority by a legitimate government. The commission would have at their disposal military contingents supplied by powers represented in it. The status of the commission and principles on which local administration would be based should be elaborated in agreement with the Polish government. The Polish government desires to state here that lawful Polish authorities, which were abolished by German occupying power in violation of stipulations of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907, continued to function underground and should form a basis of administration of the country.

After the return to Poland of supreme state authorities and those of her nationals, who, owing to military events, remain outside the frontiers of the country, elections will be held on the basis of a universal, free, direct, secret, and proportional ballot, which offers all political parties full freedom of electoral activities and all citizens an equal and free right to express their will. The Polish government will retain its authority until convoca-

tion of the *Sejm* [parliament], elected in accordance with the aforesaid principles and the formation in Poland of a new legitimate government.

4. The Polish government is confident that the government of Great Britain will not agree to be a party to decisions concerning the Allied Polish Republic arrived at without the participation and consent of the Polish government. The Polish government confidently trusts that at the conference of the great Allied Powers, the British government will give expression to their resolve not to recognize accomplished facts in Poland, particularly, not to recognize a puppet government. Recognition of such a government in Poland would be tantamount to recognition of the abolition of independence of Poland, in defense of which the present war was begun.

London, January 22, 1945

27. Statement of Polish underground upon disbanding, July, 1945:

The decision to dissolve does not signify the spiritual capitulation of the nation. The goals put forth by the parties of Fighting Poland have not changed. We are deeply convinced that these parties will not abandon the fight until their postulates of full Polish sovereignty and true democracy in Polish affairs and in international relations are realized.

In its battle with the Polish parties that represent the preponderant majority of the nation, Soviet propaganda constantly invokes the slogan of democracy, hurling the charge of reactionary at all Poles who stand for genuine independence. As everything would seem to indicate that there is a fundamental divergence between the Eastern and Western conceptions of democracy, we deem it necessary to state the views of the Polish nation on the subject:

1. Democracy means the right of all strata in a nation to choose a socio-political system, and the attitude toward life from which that system stems.

2. Democracy means freedom, aptly described in the Atlantic Charter as freedom from fear and from want, personal freedom, freedom of speech and of religion.

3. Democracy means equal rights for all political groups, be they conservative or radical-progressive, so long as they do not abuse freedom of assembly to spread anarchy or to impose their views by force.

4. Democracy means government of the majority, chosen by free, unfettered, universal suffrage.

5. Democracy means government by law, binding on both the governing and the governed and insuring both individual freedom and the authority of the government.

6. Democracy means justice based on a collective feeling of fairness, conceding to every individual, to the working class and to the nation the right to living conditions that will insure them not only material existence but also the all-around development of their creative potentialities.

7. Democracy means a system of collective security in which all states renounce the use of force and pledge themselves to accept the decisions of international organs, which would emanate from the objective norms of international law.

8. Democracy means the recognition and guarantee of equal rights to small and great powers alike to curb once and for all the tendency of great powers toward hegemony over other nations and toward a division of the world into spheres of influence.

In its relations with Russia, the Polish nation asks nothing more than respect for these basic democratic principles, for the salvaging and protection of which all the freedom-loving nations fought for five and a half years.

Closing today the proud chapter of the conspiratorial battle of Polish democratic parties for these democratic principles, [we] wish to leave behind the following program of Polish democracy in the form of a Testament of Fighting Poland:

1. Abandonment of Polish soil by the Soviet Army and by the Russian political police.
2. Discontinuation of political persecution which would be evidenced by (a) Freeing of those condemned during the Moscow trial; (b) Amnesty for political prisoners, for all soldiers of the Home Army, and for the so-called "forest units"; (c) Return of Poles deported to Russia and liquidation of the concentration camps recalling the methods of German totalitarianism; (d) Doing away with a police system that finds expression in the existence of a so-called "Ministry of Security."
3. Unification and emancipation of the Polish Army by (a) Polonizing the officer corps in the army of General Żymierski; (b) Honorable return with arms of the Polish Army abroad; (c) Merging into one whole and with equal rights of the Army abroad, plus the former Home Army, with the army of General Żymierski.
4. Discontinuation of the economic devastation of Poland by the occupation authorities.
5. Admission of all Polish democratic parties to participation in free and unfettered elections.
6. Guarantee of independence to Polish foreign policy.
7. Creation of full territorial, social, economic, and cultural-educational autonomy.
8. Socialization of big enterprises and organization of a just division of social income.
9. Assurance to the working masses of co-direction and control over the entire national economy and assurance to them of material conditions that would guarantee a livelihood to their families and personal cultural advancement to themselves.
10. Freedom of the working class to fight for its rights within the framework of a free trade union movement.
11. Equitable land reform and national control over the colonization activity in the regained Western areas and in East Prussia.
12. Basing of universal, democratic teaching and upbringing on the moral and spiritual principles found in the heritage of western civilization.

Serving notice of a fight for this program in the open political arena, the democratic parties (of the underground) express the hope that the Provisional Government of National Unity will aim at a democratization of Poland and at a cancellation of the differences and controversies that have heretofore divided the various segments of the Polish nation.

Until this aim is manifested in acts, a permanent easing of the internal situation will be impossible, and many people of Underground Poland will be compelled to continue hiding, not because they have hostile intentions toward the government, but solely because they fear for their lives. For its part, Fighting Poland asserts that it is not working toward a provocation of war between the democracies of the West and the Soviet Union, on which—as the government press declares—"the London Poles were staking their political future."

A new war would deal such heavy wounds to the Polish nation that it is the desire of all Poles to see a Polish-Russian understanding as well as an Anglo-American-Russian

understanding arrived at by peaceful means. If this understanding is to be lasting, it will not suffice to restore confidence to Polish-Russian relations. The Polish nation is a member of the great family of Central European nations and in particular of the Western Slav nations, with which it is bound by its geo-political situation and historical past, and it desires to enter into the closest political, economic and cultural community with them.

We express the hope that an understanding with Russia on these premises is possible and that it alone will liquidate the age-old Polish-Russian enmity, which has its roots in the reactionary policy of the Czars, and replace that enmity with mutual respect, trust and friendship, for the good of both nations, Europe and all democratic humanity.

28. Big Three Potsdam declaration on Poland:

We have taken note with pleasure of the agreement reached among representative Poles from Poland and abroad which has made possible the formation, in accordance with the decisions reached at the Crimea Conference, of a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity recognized by the three Powers. The establishment of the British and U.S. Governments of diplomatic relations with the Polish Provisional Government has resulted in the withdrawal of their recognition from the former Polish Government in London, which no longer exists.

The British and U.S. Governments have taken measures to protect the interests of the Polish Provisional Government, as the recognized Government of the Polish State, in the property belonging to the Polish State located in their territories and under their control, whatsoever the form of this property may be. . . .

The three Powers are anxious to assist the Polish Provisional Government in facilitating the return to Poland as soon as practicable of all Poles abroad who wish to go, including members of the Polish armed forces and merchant marine. They expect that those Poles who return home shall be accorded personal and property rights on the same basis as all Polish citizens.

The three Powers note that the Polish Provisional Government, in accordance with the decisions of the Crimea Conference, has agreed to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates, and that representatives of the allied press shall enjoy full freedom to report to the world upon developments in Poland before and during the elections.

. . . The three heads of Government reaffirm their opinion that the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should await the peace settlement.

The three heads of Government agree that, pending the final determination of Poland's western frontier, the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinemünde, and thence along the Oder River to the confluence of the Western Neisse River, and along the Western Neisse to the Czechoslovak frontier, including that portion of East Prussia not placed under the administration of the U.S.S.R., and including the area of the former Free City of Danzig, shall be under the administration of the Polish State, and for such purposes should not be considered as part of the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany.

29. *List of protests made by Polish Peasant Party in the Provisional Parliament in Warsaw. The protests were against:*

1. Mass arrests, destruction, and robbery by Security Police in Sarnaki, near Siedlce.
2. Murder of Jan Orłowski in Gładczyn. He was a district executive of the PSL.
3. Mass arrests, burning of three villages in the Siedlce area.
4. Murder of Zygmunt Jakubiec from Olszowice, near Lublin.
5. Illegal arrest of Tadeusz Nowak and Wojciech Drożdżik, PSL members of the temporary parliament.
6. Murder of Stefan Zurawiński.
7. Murder of *Wici* official Edward Chruscielewski in Kraśnik, near Lublin.
8. Murders in Kępno, where bodies of the victims were reclaimed from the grounds of the Security Police station.
9. Shooting of Franciszek Bożek, PSL secretary from Miechów, near Cracow.
10. Intimidation of members of the PSL's Self-help organization and mass arrests in Warsaw.
11. Torture of Władysław Machowiak and Bronisław Styczyński in Mogilno, near Poznań.
12. Murder of PSL chairman Józef Majka of Kilczyce in the Cieszyn prison and the burning of his house.
13. Murder of PSL chairman Franciszek Łazowski at Sierpc.
14. Murder of Józef Kulesza in prison at Wysokie Mazowieckie.
15. Illegal censorship of the PSL press.
16. Illegal dissolution of PSL district organizations.
17. Intimidations around and falsification of the Referendum.
18. Murder of Kojder.
19. Murder of Scibiorek.
20. Removal of PSL members from district and provincial councils by force.
21. Demolition of PSL headquarters in Tarnowskie Góry by Communist gangs unmolested by Security Police and People's Militia.
22. Raid on the Płock meeting of the PSL.
23. Raid on the Kłodzko meeting.
24. Murder in Cracow of Narcyz Wiatr, commander of Peasant Battalion units in Silesia, Cracow and Rzeszów during the German occupation.
25. Murder of Jews in Kielce.
26. Terrorization of PSL members in Wrocław province.

30. *Polish Peasant Party memorandum to Stalin, October 10, 1946:*

The Polish Peasant Party agreed to take part in the formation of the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity in the hope of furthering:

1. The firm establishment of the newly recovered, independent existence of Poland.
2. The rebuilding of the country destroyed by barbarous German aggression.

3. The normalization of conditions within the country and the removal of all obstacles to the harmonious cooperation of all democratic elements.

4. The realization of the Polish-Soviet alliance.

We must state that the agreement has not been kept. The Polish people are being intimidated, and the PSL is undergoing a siege of terror, abuse, and false charges.

Unfortunately, the bloc parties have shown with increasing clearness and vividness their ill will and dislike of carrying out the conditions of the Moscow Agreement.

Polish Peasant Party meetings are consistently dispersed by members of the Polish Workers' Party [Communist]. Security authorities present at the meetings tolerate assaults on those participating in the meetings and even afford shelter for the aggressors. Polish Peasant Party members are deprived of liberty under various pretexts. In fact, the main reason for their arrests is to deprive the Polish Peasant Party of the more prominent members of the party and compel them to join another political party, to frighten and terrorize them. There are cases of arrests, not only of individuals but also of the entire local party branches, and in several districts of several hundreds of persons. The lack of reason for these arrests may be illustrated by the example that in the last year out of 1,000 members of the Polish Peasant Party in the Cracow district alone, not one of them has yet been condemned to imprisonment by a legal court decision, owing to absence of guilt.

In the extermination and terrorism of Polish Peasant Party members, even murders have been employed. One of the most frequent methods of terrorism toward members and sympathizers with the Polish Peasant Party is to remove them from work and compel them in that way to leave the party or stop their activities. This frequently takes place to the detriment of the institution in which they work. . . .

Such a state of confusion and tension [resulting from terror] inside Poland is dangerous, not only for the internal relations of our state machine, but also for the present-day value of Polish-Russian friendship. The source of this unhealthy atmosphere, which engenders hostility, dissatisfaction, and anger, is seen by the citizen to lie in the methods of action of the Polish Workers' Party. Its members commit unpunished criminal deeds against their political opponents. They find assistance for their deeds in the Security Police. We are not opposed to the Security Police as an institution of security, but they must serve impartially the interests of the whole nation and the state, and they must not be the tools and servants of only one political party. Membership in the Polish Workers' Party is a warrant of being free from punishment and being free to commit illegal acts. What is more, voices of the Polish Workers' Party members are often heard, stating that in their actions they have the support of the Soviet government and the Red Army. They maintain that everyone who does not go along with them will be opposed by Russia. Serious persons state that there cannot be free elections, for this would mean that the Polish Workers' Party would lose. Polish Communists have also told the people that if the Polish Workers' Party loses, Russia will take over the entire country, and we will have no independence at all. As a result of all this, the people are blaming Russia and the Red Army for their plight.

The Polish Workers' Party usurps for itself the right of monopolization of Polish-Soviet friendship. For this reason it views with displeasure and even hostility the genuine efforts of other parties to confirm the friendly relations between the Polish and Soviet nations. Cases have even occurred when Polish Peasant Party meetings dedicated to Polish-Soviet friendship have been broken up.

In order to repair this fault, it is essential to return to the Moscow Agreement and respect of the Constitution of 1921.

The most effective way of changing this atmosphere and reestablishing normal conditions would be to hold *free and unfettered elections* as soon as possible, as provided at Yalta.

The Moscow Agreement also decided that the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity would carry out, perhaps by the end of 1945, elections to the legislative parliament on the basis of the general, equal, direct, and secret vote, guaranteeing at the same time the insurance of fair and free elections.

We are particularly disturbed by the political state of affairs in the recovered territories, where an impartial observer readily sees gross infractions of the law by Security Police and members of the Polish Workers' Party. Their actions are particularly harmful to members or sympathizers of the Polish Peasant Party who, repatriated from beyond the Bug or from central provinces, require help in every way in order to be able to start life and sow grain in the empty land.

The Polish Peasant Party represents the majority of the Polish nation and in particular the Peasant masses, which form about seventy per cent of the nation. Hence, we present those opinions on the political situation in the conviction that this may help to remove the difficulties that stand in the way of deepening the Polish-Soviet alliance and in the hope for a speedy normalization of the political conditions in Poland.

31. *United States Note on political oppression by Polish Provisional Government, January 5, 1947:*

The U.S. Government is especially perturbed by the increasingly frequent reports of repressive measures which the Polish Provisional Government has seen fit to employ against those democratic elements in Poland which have not aligned themselves with the Bloc parties.

According to information reaching this Government from various authoritative sources, these repressive activities have increased in intensity to the point where, if they do not cease immediately, there is little likelihood that elections can be held in accordance with the terms of the Potsdam Agreement, which call for free and unfettered elections on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and put forward candidates.

On December 18, 1946, M. Mikolajczyk addressed a communication to the U.S. Ambassador in Warsaw in which he called attention to the reprehensible methods employed by the Provisional Government in denying freedom of political action to the Polish Peasant Party. . . . Authoritative reports from other quarters in Poland serve to substantiate the charges brought by M. Mikolajczyk.

What is involved here is the sanctity of international agreements, a principle upon which depends the establishment and maintenance of peace and the reign of justice under law. The obligations with respect to the Polish elections which the U.S. Government assumed at Yalta and reiterated at Potsdam together with the Soviet and British Governments, provide for the conduct of free and unfettered elections of the type and in the manner described above. . . . For this reason, it is the U.S. Government's view that it is

both a duty and a right for all three Powers who are parties to the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements to call to the attention of the Polish Government the failure of that Government to perform its obligations.

The U.S. Government feels that it would be failing in its duty if it did not make further efforts prior to the elections to ameliorate the conditions under which certain democratic elements of the Polish population are now struggling to take their rightful part in the national elections. It intends, therefore, in the immediate future again to approach the Polish Government with a reminder of its obligations and to call upon it to provide these conditions of security which will enable all democratic and anti-Nazi parties to take full part in the elections.

32. Communist orders to the Polish Army before the Election, December, 1946:

You should inform the broad masses of peasants that in the fight which is going on in Poland and which seeks to establish firmly the freedom, independence and democratic form of Poland, the Polish Army, iron hand of the People's Poland, marches in the first line.

You should improve the conditions of security in our country and show to all who are open to the advice of the Fascist underground (and to their legal supporters—the PSL) the strength of our Government and of the Democratic Front.

You are obliged to counteract actively the hostile underground propaganda and the propaganda of the Polish Peasant Party which supports the bandits. You must penetrate in your action to the most remote hamlets and villages and bring to them the truth about the democratic Poland.

The task of the Defense-Propaganda groups is not the hunting of armed gangs. . . . Commanders must study the political conditions along the route of operations. They must study carefully what is the strength and influence of the Polish Peasant Party in each locality, prepare a list of all outstanding political leaders and mark the more active leaders of the PSL in the locality and watch their activities.

The cost of military quarters for the groups, and their food, will be secured from the farmers of the locality, the local mayor or chairman of the local council.

Upon arriving in a new area commands should contact the local administration and make an immediate investigation of political conditions. After securing food and quarters, mass-meetings of the village or area must be scheduled. Knowledge of the influence of the PSL is especially important. Inquiries must be made about the strength of the party in the area, how its members behave in the local cooperatives, how they carry on their duties. Their personal lives and business transactions must be searched, also their association with the distribution of such UNRRA supplies as reached the area.

Dates of local mass meetings should be fixed in consultation with the mayor. Soldiers should be used to inform the people. Clergymen must be told to announce the dates and sites of meetings. Demobilized soldiers in the appointed area must be advised to cooperate and take part in the campaign.

Announcements should carry the names of local leaders, several of whom should be secured to speak in a favorable manner. If a meeting fails because of the absence of the people another must be scheduled and steps taken to secure proper attendance. The de-

fense group must take part in the meeting, but not in loose formation. It must be in military formation and stationed close to the entrance of the assembly hall or other site.

Agendas of all meetings will include 1) Opening speech of the commander, followed by a speech of a local leader; 2) Question period; 3) Resolution condemning the PSL, and closing.

The PSL must be attacked along these lines: members do not pay taxes or offer public rehabilitation services; they support the underground gangs; they soon will be liquidated by the Government. The question period must be very short. Organizers must prevent discussion or any effort to turn the questions into a line sympathetic to the PSL. If a questioner becomes too brave and asks undesirable questions he must be immediately attacked as an instigator, provocator and hostile towards the Government and the State.

Propaganda material should be carefully distributed. The pamphlet 'Soldier's Word' should be handed generously to each farmer and he must be warned that this is a military book and cannot be destroyed. Posters must be placed on the walls of PSL members. The owner must be present while the posting takes place, his name must be noted and he must be warned that he is personally responsible for its safekeeping.

Soldiers are not permitted to walk alone, but in groups. Their instructions in the political fight must be continuous. The people of each area must be told that the group will come again to test their political consciousness and knowledge. Attitudes of teachers, priests, local mayors and PSL leaders must be forwarded in memoranda at frequent periods.

33. *The February 7, 1947, list of new government officials:*

Józef Cyrankiewicz, Socialist, Prime Minister; Władysław Gomułka, Communist, Vice-premier and Minister for the Western Territories; Antoni Korzycki, Government Peasant Party, Vice-premier; Zygmunt Modzelewski, Communist, Foreign Affairs; Marshal Michał Rola-Żymierski, nonparty, National Defense; Henryk Świątkowski, Socialist, Justice; Konstanty Dąbrowski, Socialist, Finance; Stanisław Radkiewicz, Communist, Security; Edward Osóbka-Morawski, Socialist, Public Administration; Kazimierz Rusinek, Socialist, Labor and Social Welfare; Stanisław Skrzyszewski, Communist, Education; Hilary Minc, Communist, Industry; Włodzimierz Lechowicz, Socialist, Food and Commerce; Ludwik Grosfeld, Socialist, Foreign Trade and Navigation; Bolesław Podedworny, Government Peasant Party, Forests; Tadeusz Michejda, Christian Labor, Health; Stefan Dybowski, Democrat, Culture and Fine Arts; Jan Rabanowski, Democrat, Communications; Dr. Feliks Widy-Wirski, Christian Labor, Information; Michał Kaczorowski, Socialist, Reconstruction; Jan Kocioł, Government Peasant Party, Agriculture; Józef Putek, Government Peasant Party, Post and Telegraphs; and Wincenty Rzymowski, Democrat, and Wincenty Baranowski, Government Peasant Party, ministers without portfolio.

INDEX

A

AL (People's Army), 49
 Albrecht, Jerzy, 232
 Alter, Wictor, 25
 American Red Cross, 18, 55
 Amnesty, of Poles by Russia, 16-18, 20-21, 30,
 209-210, 266
 Anarchism, 49
 Anders, Gen. Władysław, 18, 20-24, 30, 34-
 35, 63, 97
 Anglo-Polish alliance pact, 51
 Anglo-Polish Parliamentary Group, 47
 Anglo-Soviet guarantee, 103
 Arciszewski, Tomasz, 106-107, 109-110
 Atlantic Charter, 18, 27, 45, 47, 70, 74, 77, 97,
 137, 254
 and Poland, 18-19
 and Russia, 18-19, 254
 Attlee, Clement, 57, 137, 139
 Augustyński, 183
 Austria, 6, 117

B

Baczak, 182
 Bach, von dem, 69
 Badlinski, Lieutenant, 168
 Bagiński, Kazimierz, 112, 129, 183-184, 240
 Baltic States, 5, 35, 42
 Banach, Kazimierz, 239
 Bańczyk, Stanisław, 145-146, 157, 174, 223
 Baranowski, 185
 Barcikowski, Wacław, 212
 Barlicki, Norbert, 207
 Bartkiewicz, 149-150
 "Batory" (Polish liner), 9
 Beck, Józef, 223
 Belsen, 122
 Beneš, Eduard, 108
 Berezowski, Stanisław, 58
 Becia, Laventy, 36, 233
 Berlin, 28, 118, 121, 248

Berling, Gen. Zygmunt, 36, 63, 85, 183, 231
 Berman, Jakób, 146, 149, 164, 168, 230-232,
 255
 Bertold, Edward, 107
 Bessarabia, 5, 42
 Bevin, Ernest, 139, 146
 Białowieża Forest, 144
 Białystok, 223
 Biddle, A. J. Drexel, Jr., 44, 46
 Bielsk, 150
 Bielsko, 191
 Bień, Stanisław, 129
 Biełkowski, Władysław, 174
 Bierut, Bolesław, 49-50, 76-77, 107, 113-114,
 124-125, 127-128, 131, 134, 137, 139,
 141-144, 151, 155-157, 160, 168-169,
 174-175, 177-178, 187, 203-206, 225,
 230, 232
 Big Three, 56, 93, 97, 103-104, 114-115, 156,
 196, 255
 at Berlin, 118
 at Potsdam, 119, 136-138, 143
 at Teheran, 45, 47, 49
 at Yalta, 108-109, 111, 162, 166, 179
 and Polish Provisional Government of Na-
 tional Unity, 137-139
 Bliziński, Father, 227
 Błyskawica radio station, 89
 Bochnia, 149, 190
 Bogatz, 189
 Bogomolov, Russian Ambassador, 20, 26, 30,
 35
 Bogucice, 150
 Bojko, 209
 Borejsza, Jerzy, 232, 238
 Bór-Komorowski, Gen. Tadeusz, 67-69, 76,
 78-79, 81, 83, 85-86, 89, 109, 112
 Borowiec, Tadeusz, 217
 Boy Scouts, 155
 in Warsaw, 67
 Brest-Litovsk, 144
 British Labor Party, 57
 Bryja, Wincenty, 186, 199, 240, 243

- Bizożowski, Jan, 151
 Buchałowice, 154
 Bulgaria, 37, 220
 Busko, 190
 Buzuluk, 20, 30
 Bydgoszcz, 153
 Byrnes, James F., 110, 138-139, 148, 171-172
 Bzowski, Kazimierz, 179, 181, 183-184, 193, 196, 200, 212
- Cadogan, Sir Alexander, 102-103
 Cairo, 46-47, 70
 Camp Hagony, 7
 Canada, 10-11
 Capitalism, 100, 221, 256
 Casablanca, 26, 45
 Catholic Church, 226-229
 Catholic Progressive Party, 185, 200, 205
 Cavendish Bentinck, Ambassador, 182-183
 Cazalet, Victor, 40
 Central Co-operative Union *Spolem*, 126
 Chabros, Kazimierz, 154
 Chaciński, Joseph, 113, 129
 Chajm, Leon, 185, 211-212
 Chelm, 73
 Chelyabinsk, 20
 Chiang Kai shek, 46
Chłopski Szanandar, 149
 Chorzyna, Hanna, 173-174
 Christian Labor Party, 8, 44, 92, 114-116, 127, 147, 175, 200, 210
 and Communists, 174-175, 185
 Chrzanów, 191
 Churchill, Winston, 9, 14, 18-19, 25-27, 40-41, 44-46, 48-49, 51-55, 57-59, 62, 65, 71, 81-84, 86, 92-99, 101-105, 108, 110-111, 113, 115-118, 137, 159, 207, 277, 282
 messages from Mikołajczyk to, 267-268
 tribute to Gen Sikorski, 40-41
 Churchill, Mrs., 116
 Chyrów, 143
 Ciechanowski, Jan, 25, 56
 Coal, 141-142, 213, 218
 Collectivism, 56, 63, 220
 Comintern, 49, 232
 Communist Party, 182, 185, 210, 233
 Communists, 4, 10, 14, 25, 43, 49-50, 58, 75-77, 79, 100, 114, 124-125, 132, 136-138, 140, 145-146, 148, 152, 156-160, 162-168, 170-172, 174-176, 178, 181-200, 204-206, 209, 211-212, 216, 218-220, 223-224, 229, 236-239, 241, 243-244, 247, 250, 253, 255, 257-258
- Communists, and Christian Labor Party, 174-175, 185
 in Czechoslovakia, 243
 description of, 251-252
 German, 11, 79
 Polish, 36, 40, 50, 57, 63, 70, 100, 120, 137, 168-169
 and Polish Army, 297-298
 Spanish, 211
 youth movement of, 225-226, 228
 Cooperative Auditing Union, 126
 Cooperatives, 151, 214, 216, 227
 Copenhagen, 171-172
 Council of Ambassadors, 1923, 55
 Council of National Unity, 83, 285
 (See also National Council of Poland)
 Cracow, 15, 33, 37, 132-133, 147-148, 159, 164, 167, 190-191, 235, 242
 Crimea, 109-111, 114
 Curzon, Lord, 55
 Curzon line, 27, 48, 51-55, 57, 62, 64, 70, 74, 76, 92, 94-99, 101, 104, 109-110, 143-144, 204, 261-262
 Cyrankiewicz, Józef, 168, 170, 174, 185, 211, 230, 232
 Czapinski, 207
 Czarnowski, 129
 Czechoslovakia, 6, 37, 117, 138, 243
 Communists in, 243
 and Poland, 43, 92, 100, 108, 119, 126
 Czemiński, Stefan, 173
 Cząstochowa, 167
- D
- Dąbrowski, Konstanty, 107, 131
 Dachau, 122
 Dagorski, Lieutenant, 168
 Danzig, 95, 121, 213
 gulf of, 143
 D-Day, 58
 Dębski, Aleksander, 8, 123
 de Gaulle, General, 61
 Democratic Party (SD), 185, 210
 Denisov, Captain, 189
 Denmark, 142
 Dumitrov, 258
 Dmochowska, Mme., 182
 Dobrowolski, Kazimierz, 181
 Drohobycz, 60
 Drzewiecki, Bronisław, 184
 Dubois, Stanisław, 207
 Duch, General, 8
 Działdowo, 152

E

- East Prussia, 2, 48, 53, 60, 74, 95, 138, 142
 Ebling, 143
 Eden, Anthony, 16, 19, 43-48, 53-56, 62, 92-93, 97-99, 112, 138-139
 Education, in Poland, 173, 206, 225-226, 232, 234
 Ehrlich, Henryk, 25
 Eisenhower, General, 58
 Elbe River, 117, 138
 England (*see* Great Britain)
 Estonia, 5
 Europe, 11, 52, 98, 108, 117
 eastern, German crimes in, 37
 southeastern, 5

F

- Farmer's Association, 154
 Farmers, 215, 219-221
 Fascists, German, 29, 31-34
 Filipkowski, Colonel, 76
 Finland, 5, 86
 Food and Agriculture Organization, 148, 171
 France, 6-7, 79, 92, 100, 107, 119, 122, 129, 138
 evacuation of Polish forces from, 9
 fall of, 8-9
 Polish citizens in, 8
 Polish underground in, 58, 122
 Frank, Hans, 15, 55, 133, 227
 Free election, in Poland, 124-126, 130, 139, 151, 156-157, 167-170, 175-176, 180-181, 187, 239
 Freedom Square, Poznań, 136
 French Committee of National Liberation, 43, 61
 French High Command, 9

G

- Gas chambers, German, 90
 (*See also* Poles, brutal treatment of)
Gazeta Ludowa, 149, 162, 164, 168, 172, 177, 183, 197, 200, 204, 209, 227-228, 238-239
 Gdańsk, 160
 German crimes, in eastern Europe, 37
 in southeastern Europe, 5
 German propaganda (*see* Propaganda, Nazi)
 German reparations and Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, 140
 German-Russian nonaggression pact, 4-6, 16
 Secret Supplementary Protocol, 52
 German *White Book*, 37

- Germany, 1, 4-5, 37, 108, 110, 138, 207-208, 248
 Communism in, 79
 eastern, 62, 138
 and Poland, 2, 63, 86-89, 95, 138
 (*See also* Poland, and Germany)
 prison camps in, 2
 Soviet troops in, 147
 and war with Russia, 11-13, 19, 26, 54, 62, 74, 79, 81-82
 Gestapo, 31, 41, 87, 93, 132, 154, 208
 Gliwice, 159, 213
 Gniezdovo, 29, 32, 34
 Gniezno, 182, 200
 Goering, Herman, 37
 Gojski brothers, 150
 Gomułka, Władysław, 107, 114, 131, 135-136, 148-149, 159, 164, 168, 172, 185, 210-213, 230-232
 Górka, 20
 Górnik Nowe, 153
 Gostyński, Major, 189
 Government of National Unity (*see* Polish Provisional Government of National Unity)
 Grabski, Stanisław, 65, 70, 74, 93, 114, 126, 137
 Great Britain, 6-7, 9, 12, 16, 19, 26, 41, 48, 51-54, 56, 66, 79, 81, 86, 90-92, 97-98, 100-109, 119, 129, 134, 137-139, 146-147, 178, 188, 196, 202, 212, 215
 Polish government's notes to, 273-277
 Greiser, Gauleiter of Warthegau, 15
 Griazovietz, 29-30, 33
 Grocholski, 182-183
 Grójec, 153-154, 173
 Grosfeld, Ludwik, 211
 Grot-Rowecki, Gen Stefan, 8, 42, 123
 Grubecki, Jan, 163
 Gubin, 190, 247
 Gulf of Danzig, 143
 Gwiazdowicz, 168

H

- Hague Convention, 33-34
 Harriman, W Averell, 53, 93, 96, 103-104, 108, 113, 115, 127
 Hemple, 49-50
 Hitler, Adolf, 6, 8-9, 11-15, 23, 36, 41, 45, 76-77, 99, 121-122, 142, 207-208, 228, 252-253
 Hlond, Cardinal, 168, 227-229
 Hochfeld, Mr., 209
 Home Representation Parties, 44
 (*See also* Polish Home Political Representation)

Hopkins, Harry L., 114-115
 Hostiges, Polish, 43, 88
 Housing, in Poland, 172-217
 Hulewicz, Maria, 240-241, 244
 Hull, Cordell, 25, 45
 Hungary, 7-8, 100, 138

I

Independence, of Poland (*See* Poland, independence of)
 Infant mortality, among Poles in Russia, 24
 (*See also* Poles, brutal treatment of)
 Inner City, 84
 Inowroclaw, 159, 189
 International Tribunal, 37
 Inverchapel, Lord (*see* Kerr, Sir A. Clark)
 Iran, 42, 47, 49
 Iron Curtain 201, 254, 257-258
 Italy, 7-8, 86, 88, 98, 138, 207-208
 Ivanov, Colonel General, 112

J

Jagła, 186
 Jakovlev, First Secretary, 230
 Jakubiec, Zygmunt, 154
 Jankowski, Jan, 67, 111
 Janusz, Stanisław, 107
 Jarotek, Jan, 150
 Jasiukowicz, 129
 Jędrzychowski, Stefan, 132, 232
 Jews, 15, 122-123, 167-168
 Polish, in Russia, 63
 (*See also* Pogroms)

K

Kaczmarczyk, Wojciech, 150
 Kaczorowski, Michał, 131
 Kalinin, President, 18, 29
 Kalisz, 182, 191
 Kalugin, Colonel, 78
 Kaminski, 186
 Kartuzy, 189
 Katowice, 158-159
 Katyn, 27-28, 31-32, 34-38, 51, 55, 65, 122, 263
 Katyn documents, 37
 Kepno, 150
 Kerr, Sir Archibald Clark (Lord Inverchapel), 72, 108, 113, 115, 127
 Kharkov, 29, 35
 Khryshchev, Commissar, 109
 Kijów, 167-168, 191, 199

Kierbedź bridge, 88
 Kiernik, Władysław, 116, 125, 131, 148, 155
 King, Mackenzie, 10
 Kiniewicz, General, 223
 Klumczak, 186
 Klusko, Zenon, 232
 Kobusy, 150
 Kojder, Władysław, 148-149, 167
 Kołodziej, Józef, 150
 Kołodziejski, Henryk, 114
 Komi, Republic of, 20
 Königsberg, 53, 60, 74, 143-144
 Konin, 190
 Kopera, Krzysia, 154
 Korboński, Stefan, 151, 240
 Korczyński, General, 187-188, 234
 Korneychuk, 27
 Korzycki, 185
 Kościuszko, Tadeusz, 133
 Kot, Stanisław, 18, 20-22, 30, 35, 42, 65, 259
 Kotowski, Jan, 154
 Kotuniak family, 151
 Kowalski, Władysław, 114, 132, 223-224
 Kozelsk, 21, 29-30, 33-35
 Krawczyk, Lieutenant, 168
 Kremlin, 3, 13, 19, 22-23, 37-40, 65, 69, 106, 135, 170
 (*See also* Moscow, Russia, Stalin)
 Krosno, 34
 Krotoszyn, 166, 245
 Krześniak, Lt Teodor, 153
 Krzyżanowski, Adam, 114
 Kuibyshev, 22-23, 30
 Kukiel, Lt Gen Marian, 29, 55, 65
 Kukiel, Władysław, 150
 Kutrzeba, Stanisław, 114, 124
 Kwaśniewski, Aleksander, 189
 Kwieciński, Franciszek, 8, 123

L

Labor battalions, 33
 Labor camps, Russian, 14, 18, 21, 24, 253
 (*See also* Poles, brutal treatment of)
 Labor unions, 216-217
 Lane, Arthur Bliss, 172
 Lange, Oskar, 62-64
 Lapanów, 150
 Latvia, 5, 8
 Lebedev, Russian Ambassador, 64-65, 86, 92, 178, 190, 206, 230
 Lempicki, Józef, 150
 Lempiec, 150
 Lend-Lease, 25, 57
 for Poland, 10, 18-19, 77

Lenin, 99, 127
 Leszno, 244-245
 Lettrich, 258
 Lewandowski, 189
 "Liberated Poland," 3
 (See also Poland, 'liberated,")
 Lieberman, Herman, 207
 Lipinski, Stanislaw, 154, 193
 Lithuania, 5, 8, 144
 Litvinov, Maksim, 60-61, 116
 Litwin, Franciszek, 132, 145-146
 Lobzowska prison, 190
 Łódź, 149, 181-182, 190-191, 217, 224
 London, 1-3, 9, 11, 15-16, 19-28, 36, 41-42, 45, 47, 58, 64, 66, 69, 77-79, 85, 114-115, 127
 (See also Polish government [*émigré*])
 London *Daily Worker*, 80
 Lower Silesia, 2
 Lublin, 51, 42, 49-50, 87, 107, 110, 154, 159, 184, 194-195, 206
 Lublin Committee, 71-72, 74-78, 82, 91-95, 97, 105-107, 114, 117-119, 233
 in relation to Polish government, 101
 and Russia, 69-72, 92
 (See also Lublin Poles)
 Lublin government, 24, 36, 97-98, 119, 128, 213, 219
 (See also Lublin Committee, Lublin Poles)
 Lublin Poles, 74-78, 82, 91, 94, 114, 117-118, 132, 142, 145, 213, 286
 (See also Lublin Committee)
 Luftwaffe, 87-88
 Łwów, 23, 52-53, 60, 62, 76, 87, 99, 102, 104, 110, 143-144

M

Maczek, General, 8
 Maginot line, 8, 123
 Maisky, Ivan, 16-17, 19, 40, 116-117
 Malenkov, G. M., 231
 Malinov, General, 230, 232
 Maniu, 258
Maquis, 9, 58, 61, 122
 Mariasz, Stanislaw, 150
 Markets, competition for world, 257
 Markov, Professor, 37
 Marshall, George C., 201
 Marshall Plan, 255
 Marszałkowska Street, Warsaw, 199
 Maślanka, Józef, 107
 Matuszewski, Stefan, 107, 132, 156
 Mayhew, British Undersecretary, 201
 Mazur, Stanislaw, 174, 181, 184-185

Mexico, 42
 Miechów, 157
 Mierzwa, Stanislaw, 129, 151, 183-184
 Mikołajczyk, Stanislaw, 3, 6, 9, 109, 130-139, 145, 239, 244-245
 in Canada, 148
 charged with political sabotage, 113-114
 escape of, from Poland, 240-250
 internment and escape of, 7
 as member of delegation to form new government, 114, 117-119, 124-144
 member of Food and Agriculture Organization, 148, 171
 Minister of Agriculture, 155
 and Peasant Party, 146, 171
 (See also Polish Peasant Party)
 Prime Minister, 41
 and Bierut, 76-77
 first speech of, 43, 264
 messages of, to Churchill, 267-268
 to Roosevelt, 278-284, 289
 radio address of, after fall of Warsaw, 87-88
 to Warsaw, 83-84
 resignation of, 104-105
 as Second Deputy Premier, 131
 and Stalin, 72-79, 82, 86, 91, 93-97, 99-100, 113, 125, 135, 143-144, 171, 178
 threats to, 120, 134, 136-137, 149, 153, 159, 183, 187-188, 194, 240
 in United States, 10, 58-64, 148
 Military courts, 234-237
 Mine, Hilary, 131, 141-142, 148, 151, 210-211, 215, 221, 230-232
 Moczar, Col. Mieczyslaw, 182
 Modzelewski, Zygmunt, 141, 211, 232
 Mokotów, 84, 87-89
 Molotov, V. M., 4-6, 21, 25, 30, 32, 35, 45, 71, 75, 77-78, 93, 96, 101, 108, 111-113, 115, 127-128, 138, 143, 231
 Molotov Ribbentrop Pact, 347
 Monter, Gen. Antoni Chrusciel, 78
 Moraczewski, Prime Minister, 207
 Moscicki, Ignacy, 7
 Moscow, 11, 13, 17, 21-22, 24-27, 30, 45, 48, 50, 68, 71-79, 87, 90-93, 100-101, 111, 113-120, 124, 127, 140-141, 168, 176
 (See also Kremlin)
 Moscow Agreement, 151, 165, 169, 174, 178, 193, 208, 238, 254
 Motyka, 184
 Mława, 150-151
 Mussolini, Benito, 8, 11-13
 Myślenice, 191
 Mysłowice, 190

N

- Nadobnik, 182
 Nagy, 258
 Naręw River, 5
 Narvik, 8
 National Council of Poland, 49, 83, 107, 124, 126, 165
 (See also Council of National Unity)
 National Day, 10, 159
 National Party, 8, 44, 92, 115
 Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 (see German-Russian nonaggression pact)
 Nazi propaganda, 31-32, 55, 57, 88
 Nazis, 2, 6, 15-16, 34, 37, 42, 46, 50, 56, 93, 138, 160, 188, 190-191, 196, 211, 224, 243, 252-253
 establishment of Polish radio program by, 55
 mass atrocities, in Poland, 31, 67-68, 88-90
 (See also Poles, brutal treatment of)
 Neisse River, 161, 171
New Ways, 221
 Niedziałkowski, Mieczysław, 8, 15, 123, 207
 Niedźwiedzi, Szczepan, 157
 NKVD, 36-38, 42, 66, 72, 90, 93, 112, 116, 118, 131-132, 135, 151, 153, 165, 186, 189-190, 230, 233, 242, 253
 Nonaggression pact, German-Russian, 4-6, 16
 North Africa, 9, 48
 Polish Army in, 25
 Norway, German-occupied, 18
 Nowak, Tadeusz, 182
Nowe Drogi, 221
 Nowogrodek, 87
 Nowy Sącz, 157
 Nuremberg trials, 37-38
 Nygowski, Franciszek, 151

O

- Ochab, Edward, 206, 232
 Oder line, 48, 51, 74
 Oder River, 102-103, 138-139, 161, 171
 Oil, 99, 102, 104, 143, 213
 Okęcie airport, 130
 Okulicki, Col. Leopold, 111, 129
 Olszewice, 154
 Opole, 158-159
 Opole Silesia, 48
 ORMÖ, 156-157, 186, 219, 231, 233-234
 Osiecki, Stanisław, 181, 184
 Osiejowa, Madamc, 199
 Osóbka-Morawski, Edward, 75-76, 79, 107, 112, 124-125, 128, 131, 135, 141-144, 149, 153-157, 164, 168, 170, 177, 185, 197, 207, 211

- Ostashkov, 21, 29-30, 33, 35-36
 Ostów, 245
 Ostrow Wielkopolski, 150
 Ostrowiec, 191
 Oświęcim, 90, 211, 213, 253
 OWI broadcasts, in Poland, 25
 to Poland, 58, 61

P

- Paderewski, Ignacy Jan, 7, 10-11
 Palmiry, 15, 160
 Paluga, 188
 Panfilov, General, 23
 Paris, 7-8
 Partition of Poland (See Poland, partition of; Russia and partition of Poland)
 Paszkiewicz, General, 223
 Pavlov (Stalin's interpreter), 72, 74
 Pawełko, Lieutenant, 153
 Pavlishchev, 33
 Peace Settlement, 103
 Peasant Battalions, 140, 154, 241
 Peasant Party, 8, 15, 44, 63, 92, 107, 112, 124, 126-127, 132-133, 135-136, 145-147
 Peasant Party (SL), Communist-sponsored, 184, 208, 210, 223
 Peasant Party Battalion, 119
 Peasant Youth Union *Wici*, 150, 154, 177, 182
 People's Militia, 173, 186
 Peoples' Workers List, 191
 Petkov, 258
 Piasecki, 185
 Piaseczno, 189
Piast, 149
 Piekalkiewicz, Jan, 123
 Piłsudski, Józef, 207
 Piłsudski-Betek regime, 7, 44
 Piotrowski, 207
 Płock, 159
 Pogroms, 167-168
 (See also Jews)
 Poland, and Allies, 9, 16-17, 39, 44, 52, 58, 60, 94, 128, 135, 241, 253
 anti-Russian feeling in, 204
 and Atlantic Charter, 18-19
 betrayals of, by Stalin, 70-90, 121-122, 142-144
 boundaries of, 23, 25, 27, 45, 48, 51, 53-56, 59, 65, 70, 74, 76, 95-98, 101-104, 109, 126, 138-140, 142-144, 161, 171-172
 prewar, 17, 19, 23, 101, 139
 and Czechoslovakia, 43, 92, 100, 108, 119, 126
 downfall of, 6, 9

- Poland, eastern, 11, 51-52, 54, 70, 73-74, 99, 101, 109, 136-137, 272-273
 Russian invasion of, 6, 33
 Russia's claims in, 27, 46, 52, 96, 104, 141
 economic sovietization of, 213-222
 through licensing, 215, 219, 228
 through price-fixing, 214
 through taxation, 214-215
 education in, 173, 206, 225-226, 232, 234
 free election in, 124-126, 130, 139, 151, 156-157, 167-170, 175-176, 180-181, 187, 239
 free press in, 151, 165-166, 174, 238
 future of, 58, 61, 65, 70, 72, 93, 190, 114, 117, 119, 151, 169, 287-289
 Russia's plans for, 106
 and German reparations, 140-141
 and Germany, 2, 6, 15, 20-21, 31-32, 49, 67-69, 71-72, 75, 78-79, 81-82, 85-86, 95, 112, 123, 175-177, 252, 262
 housing in, 172, 217
 imperialism of, Russia's complaints of, 27, 95, 261
 independence of, 57-60, 64, 75, 84, 86, 89-90, 96, 98, 100-104, 113-114, 131, 135, 140, 223, 227, 241
 Lend-lease in, 10, 18-19, 77
 "liberated," 3, 49, 66, 106, 110-111, 133, 142
 liberation of, 10, 24, 44, 54
 looting of, by Russia, 119, 141, 213, 234, 241
 losses of, in war, 96
 nationalization of, 151, 161-162, 218
 Nazi invasion of, 6, 41, 122, 127-128
 Nazi mass atrocities in, 31, 67-68, 88-90
 new government for, after Warsaw, 91-105
 after Yalta, 124-129, 143
 OWI broadcasts in, 25
 OWI broadcasts to, 58, 61
 partition of, 4-5, 51, 53, 59-60, 96, 98
 Prime Ministers of, 3, 7, 106, 131, 207
 Provisional Government of, 106-107, 109, 111, 115, 162, 164, 169-170, 172, 178, 180-181, 183, 241
 (See also Polish Provisional Government of National Unity)
 Red Army in, 50, 54-56, 59, 63, 67-70, 72, 94, 104, 126, 132, 140, 147-148, 150, 159, 220, 223, 234
 Referendum in, 156-157, 161-165, 175, 212
 rehabilitation of, 98, 148, 172
 and Russia, 2, 14-18, 25-26, 36, 39, 41-42, 127-129
- Poland, and Russia, severed relations of, 32, 39-40, 43, 45, 263
 (See also Polish-Soviet relations)
 Small Constitution of, 206
 Soviet proposals to, 65
 underground activities for (see Polish underground)
 and UNRRA, 148
 on V-E Day, 2-3
 western, 11, 56, 102, 104, 108-109, 111, 137, 141, 188, 213, 220
 Yalta, promises at, to, 3, 108, 136-137, 139, 162-163, 175, 178
 Yalta decision on, 110-115, 119-120, 124, 130, 136-137, 139, 143, 162, 166, 175, 177-179
- Poles, 2, 74, 100, 119
 brutal treatment of, by Nazis, 15, 88, 122, 189
 by Russians, 24, 104, 150-154, 157-158, 167, 173-174, 186, 188-190, 192, 196, 199-201, 210, 224, 235-237, 256
 in Canada, 10
 extermination of, 2, 15, 34, 98
 infant mortality of, in Russia, 24
 release of, by Russia, 18, 20-21, 29
 relief supplies cut off from, 22
 repatriation of, 44, 51, 136, 204
 in Russia, 6, 14, 17-18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 29, 43, 62, 257, 259-260
 Russian amnesty to, 16-18, 20-21, 30, 209-210, 266
 (See also Polish-Americans)
- Polish Air Force, 9, 234
 Polish-Americans, 10, 57
 Polish Army, 118, 125, 129, 156, 187, 234
 Communist orders to, 297-298
 in North Africa, 25
 and Red Army, 42-44, 49, 57, 65
 in Russia, 17-20, 22-24, 29
 missing officers of, 20-22, 26-27, 29-31
 German investigations of, 32-33, 35
 mass murder of, 28, 31-38, 65
 (See also Polish Home Army)
- Polish citizens, in France, 8
 Polish Committee of National Liberation, 70-71, 93-94, 101-102
 Polish Constitution of 1921, 175
 Polish government (*émigré*) in London, 3, 10, 14, 17, 32, 36, 51, 80-82, 107, 109-110, 117, 119-120, 143, 272-273
 notes to Great Britain, 273-277
 recognition of, 7, 77
 in relation to Lublin Committee, 101
 and Russia, 16-18, 20-21
 (See also London; Stalin)

- Polish Home Army, 8, 42, 44, 52, 55-58, 65, 70, 73-79, 81, 85, 87, 90, 104, 112, 119, 122, 125, 173, 183, 204, 224, 227, 241
 amnesty for, 140, 210
 (See also Poland, Russian amnesty to)
- Polish Home Political Representation, 264-266
 (See also Home Representation Parties)
- Polish National Day, 10, 159
- Polish Peasant Party (PSL), 147-151, 154-155, 157, 159-162, 165-170, 172-173, 176-179, 181-193, 196-200, 202-205, 209-210, 212, 222-223, 225, 235, 237-241, 256
 congress of, 1946, 149, 152-153
 memorandum to Stalin, 294
 protests of, 294
 publications of, 149, 238-239
 youth movement of, 150, 177
- Polish Peasant Party—New Liberation, 184-185, 200
- Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, 62, 108-112, 114-116, 125, 181, 183, 201, 205
 aims and principles of, 126-127
 and Big Three, 137-139
 Commission of Three, 108, 113-115, 120, 125, 127, 135
 and German reparations, 140
 and international affairs, 134
 officials of, 1947, 298
 parliament of, 151, 157, 165, 173-175, 177, 183, 186-187, 203-205, 209-210, 212-213, 222, 239-240
 (See also Council of National Unity, National Council of Poland)
 protests to, by Polish Peasant Party, 294
 by U.S. Government, 296-297
 in Warsaw, 130-131, 140
- Polish radio program, established by Nazis, 55
- Polish Referendum, June 30, 1946, 161-166, 169, 175, 212
 American note concerning, 169
 British note concerning, 169
 Popular Voting Commissions for, 164
- Polish Socialist Party (PPS), 185
- Polish-Soviet Agreement, 1941, 259
- Polish-Soviet military agreement, 17, 19-20, 72
- Polish-Soviet relations, 2, 14-18, 25-26, 36, 39, 41-46, 50-51, 53, 58-60, 64, 68, 71-107, 113, 142, 263
- Polish underground, 11, 14-15, 21, 25, 41-42, 49, 58, 61, 77, 90-91, 94, 98, 105, 122, 158, 171, 181-183, 188, 193-195, 223, 227, 235, 243, 250, 282
 army of, 7-9, 66-67, 73, 123
 code word of, 55
- Polish underground, deportation of, 2
 disbanding of, 137, 291
 of France, 58, 122
 and French army, 8
 and French underground, 43
 leaders of, disappearance of, 1945, 111-113, 115, 123
 trials of, 116, 118, 128-129
 and Red Army, 42, 44, 46-49, 52, 55-56, 64-67, 71, 111
 Socialist members of, 57
 supplies for, 43, 56, 68, 73, 75-76, 78-85, 87
- Polish Workers Party (Communist), 92, 94, 147
- Polish Workers' Party (PPR), 185
- Polish-Yugoslav Society, 163
- Politburo, 146, 231-232, 255
- Poniatowski bridge, 88
- Popiel, Kaiol, 116, 127, 174
- Popławski, General, 207-208
- Potash, 99, 102, 104
- Potsdam, 119, 136-137, 143, 147, 157, 163
- Potsdam Agreement, 170, 172, 178, 180, 193, 201, 208, 234, 254, 293-294
- Powisic, 84
- Poznan, 15, 135, 148, 181-182, 187, 242
- Poznań Leszno, 182
- Praga, 87-89, 131, 187
- Pravda*, 32, 71, 75
- Propaganda, Nazi, 31-32, 55, 57, 88
 Russian, 42, 56-57, 85, 171, 197, 213, 220, 224
- Provisional Polish Government (see Polish Provisional Government of National Unity)
- Prugar Kettling, General, 8
- Pruszków, 105
- Przasnysz, 189, 191
- Przemysl, 148, 191
- Ptaszki, 154
- Publication Co operative "The Reader," 127, 232
- Puławy, 154, 158
- Puzak, Kazimierz, 67, 111, 129

Q

Quebec, 84, 148-149

R

Rabanowski, Jan, 132

Rączkiewicz, Władysław, 7, 65, 109

Raczyński, Edward, 26, 30, 46-47

Radkiewicz, Stanisław, 107, 131, 155, 159, 168, 210, 224, 232-233

- Ridom, 158, 186, 191
 Radomsk, 194
 RAF, 71, 81-82, 123, 156
 Rataj, Maciej, 8, 15, 123, 160
 Ratajski, 123
 "Reader, The," 127, 232
 Red Army, 2, 6, 17, 19-20, 24-26, 29, 33, 36-38, 42, 44-45, 48-49, 52, 55, 57-58, 62-68, 70-71, 75-76, 81-82, 85, 87, 90, 93, 95, 97, 100, 104, 106, 108, 112, 118, 125, 134, 141, 147-148, 150, 159, 220, 223, 234
 Red Cross, American, 18, 55
 International, 29, 31-32, 36, 65
 Polish, 33-34, 37
 and Russia, 18
Red Star, 29
 Reds (*see* Communists)
 Rek, Tadeusz, 184, 211
 Relief workers, among Poles in Russia, 24
 Reprisals, German, 43
 Rhine River, 117
 Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 4-6, 37
 Ribbentrop Molotov line, 11
 Riga, Treaty of, 1921, 16
 Rokossovsky, General, 68, 78, 81, 86, 89, 234
 Rola Zymierski, Gen. Michał, 75-76, 131, 211, 234
 Romer, Tadeusz, 32, 42, 54, 70, 93, 102
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 2, 10, 18-19, 25-27, 44-46, 48-49, 51, 53, 56-57, 59-61, 64-65, 71, 82-84, 86, 96, 102-104, 108, 110-111, 114, 255, 277-278, 285-286
 messages from Mikolajczyk to, 278-284, 289
 Różanski, Colonel, 232
 Ruhr, 138
 Rumania, 7-8, 86, 98
 Rusinek, Minister, 211
 Russia, 4-6, 10
 appeasement of, 25-26, 37-38, 75, 94-105, 143
 and Atlantic Charter, 18-19, 254
 expansion of, 253
 and international relations, 59
 invasion of eastern Poland by, 6, 33
 and Lublin Committee, 69-72, 92
 and partition of Poland, 4-5, 56
 (*See also* Poland, partition of)
 Poles enslaved in, 18
 Polish armies in, 16-18, 20, 22, 24, 29
 and Polish government, 16-18, 20-21
 puppets of, 2, 253-254, 257
 and Red Cross, 18
 religion in, 60-61
 slave labor in, 257
 and UN, 254-255
 Russia, and war with Germany, 11-13, 19, 26, 54, 62, 74, 79, 81-82
 and war with Japan, 118
 and Western Powers, 19, 129
 (*See also* Communists, Kremlin, Moscow, Stalin)
 Russian claims in eastern Poland, 27, 46, 52, 96, 104, 141
 Russian propaganda, 42, 56-57, 85, 171, 197, 213, 220, 224
 Rybnik, 190
 Rzepecki, Colonel, 183
 Rzeszów, 87, 148, 167, 190
 Rzymowski, Wincenty, 131, 137, 163
- S
- Sadek, Lieutenant, 168
 San Francisco conference, 112-113, 119, 123, 255
 San River, 5
 Sapieha, Cardinal Adam Stefan, 114, 116, 124, 227-228, 242
 Saratov, 20, 24
 Sawicki, General Prosecutor (Reisler), 36-37
 Schoenfeld, R. E., 47, 56
 Ścibiorek, Bolesław, 145, 149, 182
 Second front, 25-26
 Security Council, United Nations, 254
 Security Police, 37, 131, 134, 146, 148-151, 153-160, 162, 164, 167-168, 173, 177-178, 182-184, 186, 189, 193-195, 198-200, 205, 210, 216, 218-219, 224, 228, 233-237, 239-246
 Self help of the Peasants, 154, 172
 Senderek, Jan, 153
 Senderek, Stanisław, 153
 Service to the Country, 226
 Shinwell, Emanuel, 55
 Sianki, 143
 Siberia, 2, 50, 63, 118-119, 189, 193, 241
 Siedlec, 151, 154
 Sikorski, Gen. Władysław, 7, 9-10, 15-18, 20-22, 29, 35, 39, 48, 59, 65
 Churchill's tribute to, 40-41
 death of, 40
 in Mexico, 42
 Soviet press attack on, 40
 and Stalin, 22-24, 26, 30
 in United States, 10
 Sikorski-Maisky Agreement, 16-17, 29
 Sikorski-Stalin Declaration, 1941, 23, 260-261
 Silesia, 60, 95
 Skarżysko-Kamienna, 190
 Skrzyszewski, Minister, 211, 225, 228
 Sławoj-Składkowski, Feliks, 7

- Slessor, Air Chief Marshal, 81
 Small Constitution, 206
 Smolensk, 27-29, 31
 Smoliński, 173
 Sobczyński, Major, 148, 167-168
 Sobolew, 188
 Socialist Party, 8, 15, 44, 63, 92, 147, 172, 208-209, 213, 225
 Communist-controlled, 75, 153, 157, 167-168, 212
 Socialists, 176, 191, 207, 209-212, 256-257
 Sokorski, Włodzimierz, 160
Soldier's Word, 187-188
 Sommerstein, Dr., 63
 Sosnkowski, Gen. Kazimierz, 52, 65, 109
 Soviet Information Bureau, 31
 Soviet-Polish relations (*see* Polish-Soviet relations)
 Spanish Civil War, 129
 Special Commission for Discipline, 215
Spolem (Central Cooperative Union), 126
 Spychalski, Col. Marian ("Mayor of Warsaw"), 109, 232, 234
 Stachyra, Franciszek, 154
 Stahl, General, 69
 Stalin, Joseph, 14, 19-27, 30, 32, 35, 38-39, 41, 44, 83-84, 93, 101-104, 108, 111, 115, 118, 127-128, 147-148, 168, 170-171, 176-177, 199-200, 225, 231, 256-257, 294
 and Bierut, 113, 137
 and Mikolajczyk, 72-79, 82, 86, 91, 93-97, 99-100, 113, 125, 135, 143-144, 171, 178
 and relations with Poland, 39-40, 42, 45-48, 51-65, 68, 70-71
 and Sikorski, 22-24, 26, 30
 (*See also* Polish-Soviet relations)
 Stańczyk, Jan, 114, 121, 125, 132
 Standley, Admiral William H., 25
 Starobielski, 21, 29-30, 33, 35-36
 Starogard, 189
 Steel, 218
 Stettin, 74, 102-103, 138, 171
 youth conference at, 155-156
 Stettin-Trieste line, 254
 Stettinius, Edward R., Jr., 57-59, 64, 108, 112
 Strauss, H. G., 111
 Stypulkowski, 129
 Sweden, 7, 142
 Świątkowski, Henryk, 37, 132
 Świebodzin, 182
 Świerczewski, Gen. Karol ("General Walter"), 128
 Sztachelski, Jerzy, 131
 Szawlbe, 168
 Szydłowski, Józef, 150
 Szygula, Mr., 189
 Szymanowski, 211
 Szyszko-Bohusz, Colonel, 8
- T
- Tabor, General, 58, 93
 Tarnobrzeg, 150
 Tarnopol, 60
 TASS, 51, 80, 112
 Teheran, 46-49, 53, 59, 61, 70, 79, 96-98, 100, 119
 Polish Army in, 25
 "Tempest," 55, 67, 82, 119
 Thugutt, Mieczysław, 132
 Tito, 117, 156
 Tkaczów, Stanisław, 132
 Tokarzewski, General, 8
 Tołwinski, Stanisław, 149
 Tomorowicz, 212
 Treaty of Riga, 1921, 16
 Treblinka, 15
 Trojanowski, Wictor, 107
 Troka, Jan, 189
 Truman, Harry S., 114, 137, 139, 148
 Tryb, 244-245
- U
- Ukraina, 27, 34, 62-63, 92, 94, 99-100, 136
 Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars, 109
 Underground (*see* Polish underground)
 Union of Polish Patriots, 24, 40
 Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (*see* Russia)
 United Nations, 50, 101-102, 114, 125, 212, 254-255
 and Food and Agriculture Organization, 148, 171
 and Russia, 254-255
 UN Charter, 254
 UNNRA, 77, 135, 215-216, 218, 239, 245
 and Poland, 148
 United States, 10, 16, 19, 55, 90, 100-104, 106, 109, 134, 137-139, 146, 215-216, 224, 239
 and Polish *émigré* government, 7, 9, 15, 51-53, 56-60, 66, 81, 86, 92, 97-98
 pro-Soviet elements in, 25
 and Provisional Government of Poland, 107-108, 178, 180, 188, 196, 201, 212, 218, 296-297
 release of frozen Russian assets by, 14
 and Stalin, 25, 79, 129
 State Department, 25

United States Army Air Force, 82, 84-85
 Urbański, Franciszek, 113, 129
 USSR (*see* Russia)
 Użok, 143

V

V-E Day, 1-3
 Versailles Treaty, 6, 95
 "Village of Death" (*see* Palmiry)
 Vilna, 5, 52-54, 60, 62, 87, 99
 Vishinsky, Commissar, 20, 30, 35, 259
 Vistula River, 5, 68, 80, 85-89
 Volhynia, 57, 87
 Vyazma, 35

W

Wachowicz, Henryk, 168
 Wągrowiec, 189
 Walas, 167
 "Walter, General" (*see* Świerczewski Gen. Karol)
 Warner, C. P. A., 115
 Warsaw, 5*n.*, 8, 50, 58, 71-80, 105-106, 112, 123, 127, 130-132, 134, 140, 149-150, 152-155, 164, 171-172, 174, 182-183, 185-186, 190-191, 193, 198-199, 239, 244, 255
 American relief for, 84-85, 89
 Boy Scouts in, 155
 forced evacuation of, 90
 Freedom Square, 136
 German demolition of, 106
 Main Railroad Station, 88
 Marszałkowska Street, 199
 National Council at, 49
 Old Town sector, 80, 88
 Russians in, 90, 106
 uprising at, 66-69, 80-90, 243
 Warthegau, 15
 Wąsik, 168
 Wasilewska, Wanda, 24, 27, 75-76, 128
 Wąwolnica, 158
 Wawrzyniak, Father, 227
 Węgrów, 188
 Welles, Sumner, 14, 19, 26
 Wesola, 188
 Western Neisse River, 139
 Western Powers, 11, 16, 170, 239
 Weygand, General, 9
 White Russia, 92, 94, 99
 White Ruthenia, 27
 Wici (Peasant Youth Union), 150, 154, 177, 182

Widy-Wirski, Feliks, 174
 Winant, Ambassador, 57
 Wiśnicz, 190
 Witaszek, 191
 Witos, Andrzej, 75-76
 Witos, Wincenty, 112, 114, 116, 124-126, 132, 145-148, 150, 152, 209
 Włocławek, 159
 Wójcik, Stanisław, 175-176
 Wola, 84
 Workers' Party, 157, 171
 World markets, competition for, 257
 World War I, 49-50, 233
 World War II, 50, 227, 255
 World War III, 224-225
 WRN (*see* Socialist Party)
 Wrocław, 37, 63, 74, 149
 Wycech, Czesław, 132
 Wychowaniec, Józef, 189

Y

Yakut, 20
 Yalta, 109-110, 119-120, 289
 Big Three at, 108-109, 111, 162, 166, 179
 decisions on Poland, 110-115, 119-120, 124, 130, 136-137, 139, 143, 162, 166, 175, 177-179
 promises to Poland at, 3, 108, 136-137, 139, 162-163, 175, 178
 violation of, 112-113, 115, 177
 Yalta Agreement, 180, 193, 201, 208, 212, 254-255
 Yugoslavia, 7, 117-118, 138

Z

Zakopane, 34
 Zakowski, Julian, 114
 Zaleski, Paweł, 240-241, 244
 Załęski, Zygmunt, 174
 Zalewski, Edmund, 107
 Zambrowski Roman, 211, 214, 230-232
 Zamość, 153
 Zarzycki-Neugebauer, Colonel, 187, 234
 Zawadzki, Gen. Aleksander, 232
 Zdanowski, 184, 191, 208
 Zhdanov, 231
 Zhukov, General, 42, 48
 Zielinski, Bernard, 151
 Ziemięcki, 207
 Żolibórz, 87-89
 Żóławski, Zygmunt, 114, 124, 191, 207-208
 Zwierzyński, 129
 Żymierski, General, 107

